

Sacked Bhutto Vows to Stay and Fight

KARACHI — Sacked Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said she was not afraid to die and would resist attempts by those who killed her brother Murtaza to "blackmail" her.

"I am not afraid of anybody. I am not scared of hanging. When the brother tries to come closer to the sister, he gets killed to blackmail me and my government," a defiant Bhutto told a public rally here late Saturday, her first since her ouster on Novemebr 5.

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Rafsanjani's Message Delivered to UAE President

ABU DHABI – Iranian Vice President Hadi Manafi met with president of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan an-Nahyan, here on Sunday and delivered him a message from President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Referring to the common historical, cultural and social bonds shared by Iran and the UAE, the UAE president emphasized the need for expansion and strengthening of relations between the two states.

(IRNA)

Protection of Islamic Values Above Relations With any Country



VELAYATI

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN- Iran's Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, here Sunday stressed that preservation of the values and sanctities of Islam and the Islamic Revolution has a definite priority over any form of political and economic relations with any country.

Talking to IRNA, he referred to the illusory remarks of the German court and said the Mykonos court has insulted the world of Islam, Islamic values and sanctities, "something which we will in no way tolerate."

He said that the German government must rectify the blunder and pointed out that in international norms, relations between countries are defined in terms of mutual respect.

He stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran defines its relations within the framework of Islamic and national values.

The foreign minister added that Germany is no exception in this respect, adding that the German government is responsible for preserving its foreign relations and should, therefore, control such blunders as committed by Mykonos court.

Velayati said that civil laws of many countries forbid insult to the leaders of other countries, and added that the German court has acted in contravention to judicial rules, international norms and the principles respected by the world public opinion.

Iran's foreign minister described the German court decision biased and said that it has relied on the statements of two Iranian fugitives as witness.

He said one of the two witnesses is under prosecution by Iran's courts for hijacking and involvement in assassination attempts, and the other for spying.

Velayati described the two Iranian witnesses as "political fossils" not aware of Iran's internal situation after their long absence from Iran.

Syria Slams Refkind's Proposal on Setting Up an Organization

DAMASCUS – Syrian government daily *Tishrin* criticized the recent proposal by British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind to set up an organization in the Middle East modelled on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) aimed at resolving regional conflict.

"The most important problem that should have the attention of the British government is the (Israeli) occupation, which is creating ... a state of war threatening the region," the paper said.

It described Rifkind's scheme as a "lifeboat sent to save Israeli extremism and the policies of Ben-

(Contd on Pg.14)

MPs Call For Reconsideration of Relations With Germany

ANGRY DEMONSTRATORS CONDEMN MYKONOS COURT

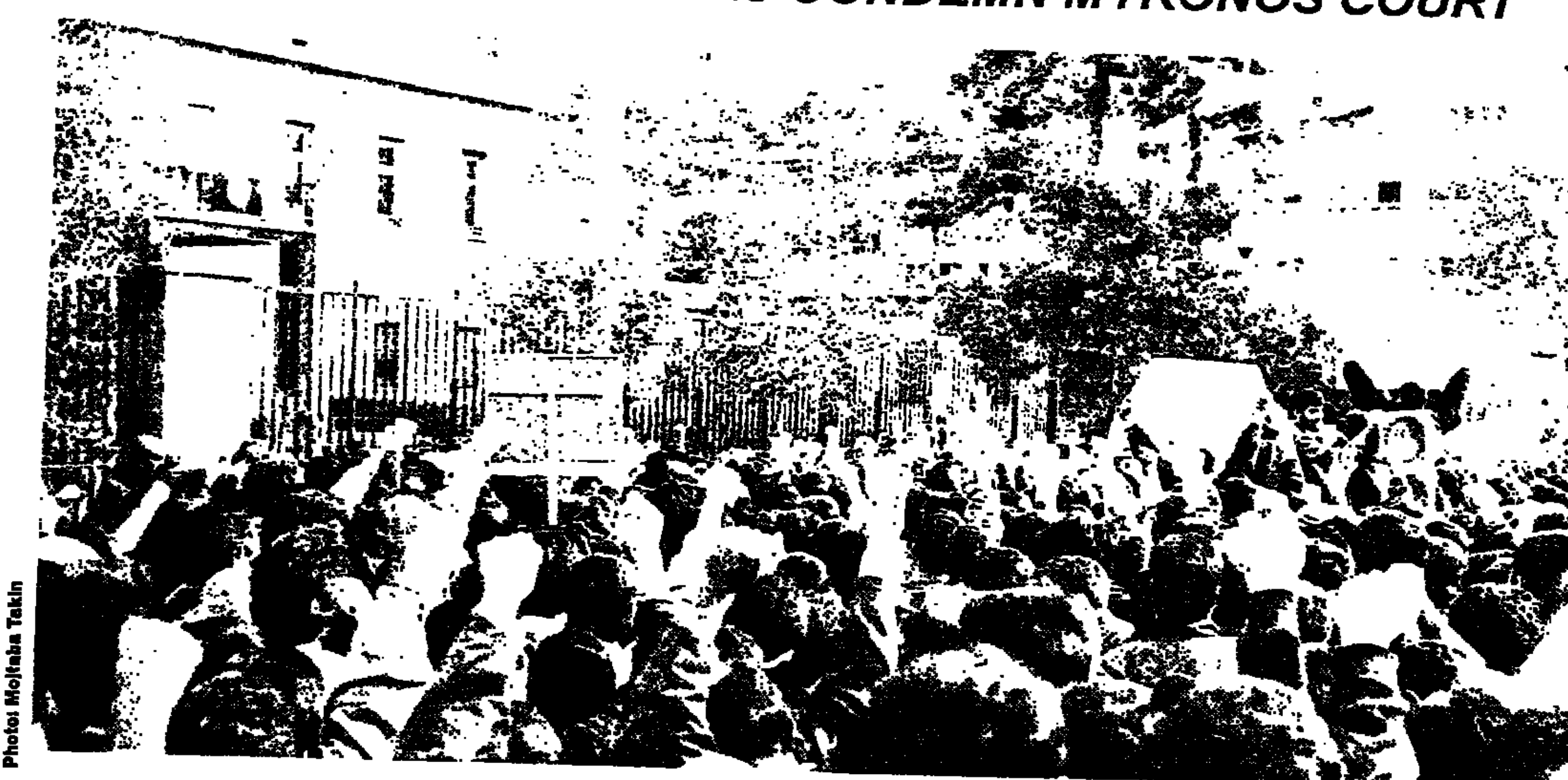


Photo: Mojtaba Takin

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Majlis deputies in a letter to the Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri asked the foreign ministry to submit a report to the Majlis on steps it has taken to review Tehran-Bonn ties.

The main task of the German Judiciary is insulting the sacred Islamic system of Iran and its high-ranking officials, the letter said.

It stressed that perhaps the German politicians have not realized that the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the most powerful countries of the region, adding, Iran is not dependent on any foreign power. The so-called superpowers have been trying for years to resume their relations with Iran, it said. It is clear for any impartial observer that the present fiasco is nothing but the result of subservience of the German political system to foreign powers and Zionist networks. Such a situation has undermined the national pride and interest of that country, the letter added. The German Judiciary in coordination with the Zionists last week levelled baseless charges against high-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Meanwhile, thousands of university students gathered in front of the German Embassy here Sunday condemning the recent accusations made by the German Judiciary against Iranian officials.

The rallies were held by the university students in Tehran to voice nation's protest against a German court disrespecting the sanctities of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its top officials.

The demonstrators, carrying placards, condemned the influence of the Zionists on the decision-making organs of the German judicial system.

The students started their rally from the Tehran University and marched to the German Embassy here.

Addressing the gathering of the university students and the public in front of the German Embassy, Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Abu-Torabi said that the Iranian nation is ready to defend the Islamic principle of *Velayat-e Faqih*, the ruling of the jurisprudence.

This great gathering points up to the fact that the Iranians will firmly safeguard the Islamic values, Abu-Torabi stressed, calling on the German diplomats at the embassy to report the protest of the Iranian nation to Bonn.

University students and common people staged a protest rally from the Tehran University toward the German embassy here condemning the recent statement of the German federal court on Mykonos case.

He urged the Islamic Republic government to take strong measures against those who disrespect the sanctities of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Issuing a statement the demonstrators expressed anger at the unacceptable move of a German court in offending the revolutionary sanctities and values of the Muslim nation of Iran.

In the 8-point statement, the

(Contd on Pg.14)



KABUL, Afghanistan (November 16): Taleban militia fighters scramble aboard their Toyota pickup carrying RPG-7 anti-tank rocket launchers and assault rifles. The Taleban's use of fast jeeps which revolutionized the Afghan battlefield, was a prime factor in their surprise capture of the Afghan captial Kabul on September 27.

(AFP PHOTO)

NATO to Decide on "Son of IFOR" Today

BRUSSELS – NATO leaders will decide formally on Monday to send a new peacekeeping force of between 20,000 and 30,000 men to Bosnia next year to replace the current IFOR, diplomats said here.

The decision will be taken by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's highest political body, the NATO council, grouping the ambassadors of 16 member countries.

At the same time, the alliance's military commanders will be asked to draw up an operational plan, including the exact size of the new body, which is to take over when the mandate of the Peace Implementation Force (IFOR) expires on December 20.

United States agreement to take part, announced Friday, lifted the last obstacle to Monday's decision, which has already been approved in advance by most NATO countries.

An international conference in Paris agreed Thursday on the political framework for continued international support for the reconstruction of Bosnia after the civil war which ended with the Dayton Agreement a year ago.

The mission of the new force is one of dissuasion, coupled with minimal support for civilian bodies. There will be no change in the rules regarding the arrest of suspected war criminals, a diplomat said.

IFOR faced criticism for its evident reluctance to do anything about actively seeking suspects wanted by the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague – though many are at large in Bosnia.

IFOR's mandate could last until mid-1998, but troops would begin to be withdrawn progressively from the second half of next year if the situation warrants it after local elections scheduled to be held between April and June.

(Contd on Pg.14)



Overnight Talks on Al-Kahil Fail to Make Progress

GAZA CITY -- Israeli and Palestinian negotiators failed overnight to push forward stalled talks over the long-delayed Israeli withdrawal in the West Bank town of Al-Khalil, officials here said Sunday.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said he met Saturday night in Jericho with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's legal adviser, Yitzhak Molkho, but "there was no progress in the talks."

Speaking to Palestine radio, Erekat accused Israel of holding up the talks with its demand for "hot pursuit" in Al-Khalil, adding: "The Israelis simply do not realize that an agreement must be reached quickly."

(Contd on Pg.14)

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TEHRAN TIMES NEWS SERVICE
Editor-in-Chief, Tel: 8809500
Editorial Office, Tel: 8810293-5
Electronic Access Tel: 8809437
8809470
Telex: 213662 TTIM IR
224569 TTIP IR
Fax No. 8808214
Address: No. 32, Koucheh Bimeh
Nejatollahi Ave. [former Villa]
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
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In the Name of Allah

And when Musa's anger calmed down he took up the tablets, and in the writing thereof was guidance and mercy for those who fear for the sake of their Lord.

(HOLY QORAN)(7:154)

OPINION

UN Conference on Afghanistan: I Take Thee "For Better or Worse?"

A UN-sponsored international conference on Afghanistan is to open in New York today. Nineteen countries, including permanent members of the UN Security Council, as well as Iran, India, Pakistan and the Central Asian republics, have been invited to participate.

Needless to say, the participants should take this conference very seriously, bearing in mind that the Afghan problem has long evaded solution and that another replay of rhetoric will not only mean more sacrifice in terms of lives and resources but an affirmation of the right to rule by brutality.

The problem of Afghanistan is not unique in history. It is an accepted fact that it sprang out of a lust for power among various groups. The good thing is that their differences are not irreconcilable. It is a given fact that no single group can rule over the entire country.

The harsh realities of powers at play trying to win concessions for themselves by taking advantage of the country's bankruptcy are the realities that require bold moves on the part of the international community.

Despite their control of Kabul, the Taleban cannot claim legitimacy notwithstanding all their efforts at displaying one by forthwith constituting a cabinet. By all standards, their way of running the state may at best be described as medieval. Moreover, women have no place in their society but as mere housekeepers and propagators of their specias. Furthermore, anarchic methods of running the state by imposing curfews and the like have made them outcasts even among their own people.

Pakistan, as the major regional power behind the Taleban, should make the initial move. But contrary to the statement of Ahmed Khalid, the Pakistani caretaker Prime Minister, no concrete step to reduce its support of the Taleban is in the offing. It is well-known that there is more than one center of power in Pakistan in so far as its Afghan policy is concerned. Hence, the difficulty of dealing with a country such as Pakistan is compounded by the fact that it is itself riddled with its own domestic problems.

The conference may therefore consider the following points as it deliberates on its options to the Afghan issue.

Firstly, the government of Burhanuddin Rabbani should be recognized as the legitimate representative of the Afghan people until a permanent solution is found to the crisis. In short, the internationally recognized government prior to the takeover of the Taleban should be restored.

Secondly, Pakistan's sincerity will now be tested in the conference and it will improve its image by agreeing to allow the Afghans to decide for themselves, *sans* its interference.

Thirdly, since an arms embargo will not work with regard to Afghanistan because of the peculiarities of its terrain and vast borders with other countries, the conference should not concentrate on this issue.

Fourthly, the Afghan crisis cannot be settled without the active participation of Afghanistan's immediate neighbors. Any plan should therefore include or have the consent of its immediate neighbors.

In sum, the conference could be another last chance at peace for that troubled country. The opportunity afforded by the conference is great and, needless to say, it is not a place for rhetoric to prosper but a venue for discussing practical solutions that should accommodate the interests of all the factions.

Statement Slams German Accusations Against Iranian Officials

TEHRAN — The Union of the Islamic Associations of College Students here on Saturday slammed the German federal prosecutor for levelling unfounded accusations against senior Iranian officials.

Issuing a strongly worded statement, the union said the decision of the German government to accuse the highest ranking officials of a country by relying on unfounded evidence is in contradiction of internationally-recognized norms.

The statement said the German government should know that such moves would discredit Germany before the world Muslims.

The German government should have known that a revolutionary nation would not overlook its principles under any circumstances and so it could not be treated in such a manner at all, the statement read.

The Bonn government had better think twice about its immature action and not allow irrepairable losses to be inflicted on German prestige, the statement concluded. *(IRNA)*

Ambassadors Designate Submit Credentials to President

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The newly-appointed ambassadors of Canada, Tajikistan and Turkey to Tehran held separate meetings with President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani here Sunday and handed copies of their credentials to him.

In his meeting with the president, the new Canadian Ambassador Charles Michel de Salaberry said that the Islamic Republic is the second trade partner of his country in the region. He stressed that Iran is an important state in the region enjoying the richest culture and civilization in the world.

He added that since Iran is located in the center of a strategic region, his country is willing to enhance economic ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The president, for his part, wished success for the Canadian diplomat during his mission in Iran. He reiterated that there is no obstacle in the way of promotion of Tehran-Ottawa ties.

In a separate meeting with President Rafsanjani, the new Tajik Ambassador to Tehran Tashmat Nazirov referred to religious, historical and cultural commonalties between the Islamic Republic and his country, saying that Tajikistan attaches great importance to Iran's role in maintaining peace and stability in the region.

On behalf of President Imomali Rakhmanov, the Tajik diplomat invited President Rafsanjani to visit Dushanbe in a near future. He said that his government and people consider the forthcoming visit of the Iranian president as a move to strengthen Tehran-Dushanbe bilateral ties.

Referring to the importance of

(Contd on Pg.15)



TEHRAN (Nov. 17) — New Canadian Ambassador hands his credentials to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.



TEHRAN (Nov. 17) — President Rafsanjani receives credentials of the new Tajik ambassador to Tehran.



TEHRAN (Nov. 17) — President Rafsanjani receives Turkish ambassador who submits his credentials to him.

Mojtaba Tabin — Tehran Times

Spanish Official Confers With Velayati

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Head of the Province of Galicia in northwest Spain, Manuel Fraga, who is here at the head of a delegation, conferred with Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati on Sunday.

Manuel Fraga expressed satisfaction with his visit to Iran and described his observations as "very wonderful and praiseworthy."

He further described the Islamic Republic of Iran as a wonderful blend of traditional values and advancements characteristic of the modern age.

"We found Iran an active, dynamic country full of energy," the Spanish official said.

Alluding to the important economic and industrial contracts and cooperation concluded between Tehran and Madrid, he praised the achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran in these areas as praiseworthy.

He evaluated Iran's role in the region, especially in Central Asia and the Caucasus, describing it as important, and referred to Iran's construction of a railway which starts from Bandar Abbas and which connects the regions to the rest of the world as a significant measure that would boost the region's economy and development.

Fraga stressed affirmation of the values, traditions and religions respected by nations and calledd the United States' imposition of monopolistic extraterritorial values and policies as "futile and an unsuccessful attempt."

On his part, Foreign Minister Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati reiterated the importance of Madrid-Tehran relations and underlined the need for constant exchange of delegations and talks between the two countries, giving an outline of Iran's plans and accomplishments.

Velayati branded regional cooperation as the most suitable and most natural form of relations among countries and welcomed the expansion of cooperation in Spain's relations with Central Asian countries and Caucasia through the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Both officials also exchanged views on the many commonalties enjoyed by divine religions and stressed peaceful inter-religions co-existence, noting international developments and the new international system.

Habibi Holds Talks With Foreign Dignitaries in Rome

ROME — The visiting Iranian Vice President Hassan Habibi in separate meetings here Saturday with senior officials of Sudan, India, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Kazakhstan discussed expansion of Iran's relations with these countries.

Habibi, heading a high-ranking delegation is currently here for the World Food Summit, organized by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

In a meeting with Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, held on the sidelines of the FAO summit, Habibi expressed satisfaction over establishment of peace between Sudan and Uganda.

Appreciating great efforts of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani of Iran and the Iranian government in settling dispute between Sudan and Uganda, Al-Bashir said that the best way to counter U.S. pressure is consolidation of friendship among all Islamic states.

In a separate meeting, Habibi and Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda stressed the need to confront the hegemonistic policies of foreign powers in the region and to settle the critical situation in Afghanistan.

Multilateral cooperation among regional states will lead to establishment of peace and security in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean regions, Habibi told the Indian prime minister.

Praising efforts made by Iran to solve Afghan crisis, Gowda noted that New Delhi supports Iran's stance on Afghanistan.

In another meeting Habibi reviewed regional and international developments with DPRK Deputy Prime Minister, Kong Jin Tae.

Landing Islamic Republic's humanitarian aid to the people of DPRK, Tae called for exchange of experiences between the two countries.

In his talks with Kazakh deputy premier, Habibi underlined the need to establish peace and stability in Central Asia and in Afghanistan. Both officials also called for further strengthening of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Condemning interference of foreign powers in internal affairs of Afghanistan, the Kazakh official praised Iran's great efforts to solve the crises in regional states including Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

(Contd on Pg.15)

President Receives Outgoing Austrian Ambassador

TEHRAN — Outgoing Austrian Ambassador to Tehran Erich Martin Buttenhauser in a meeting with President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on Saturday called for expansion of relations between Tehran and Vienna.

At the end of his mission in Iran, the Austrian ambassador said that he had witnessed great progress in Iran in infrastrucuure field and in elimination of deprivation from rural areas, which are praiseworthy.

The president in reply termed bilateral relations between Iran and Austria as positive and reliable and expressed hope that Tehran-Vienna ties would further expand in the future. *(IRNA)*

Polish Minister of Construction Confers With Velayati

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - The visiting Polish Minister of Regional Planning and Construction Ms. Barbara Blida here on Saturday voiced Warsaw's willingness to develop economic cooperation with Tehran.

In a meeting with Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, Ms. Blida said there exist bright prospects for Tehran-Warsaw relations, IRNA reported.

Elaborating on the latest economic developments and the process of privatzation in Poland, Ms. Blida voiced the interest of Polish companies to go on joint investment with Iranian businessmen.

She hoped that in her negotiations with Iranian officials, agreements would be made to facilitate economic cooperation between Iran and Poland.

Ms. Blida handed over a volume of Holy Qoran's translation in official Polish language to Velayati and said translating the Holy Qoran in Polish indicates Islam's lofty status in Poland.

Velayati said the political will to upgrade economic cooperation between the two nations and regularly holding of Tehran-Warsaw joint economic commission would serve to form a comprehensive cooperation between Iran and Poland.

The two officials called for holding the session of joint economic commission at the earliest convenience.

Iran-Canada to Expand Private Sector Cooperation

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Canadian Senator, Nicholas Taylor, and that country's ambassador to Tehran conferred with vice-chairman of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines, Mir Mohammad Sadeqi, surveying ways for expansion of economic cooperation and strengthening private secotr relations between the two countries.

Mir Mohammad Sadeqi said that in the first and second five year development plans, the way has been paved for active presence of private sector in economic operations.

He added that suitable laws have been formulated, encouraging foreign investment and ensuring the interests of domestic and foreign investors.

On Iran's foreign debts, Mir Mohammad Sadeqi said that Iran will clear all its debts in the next four years.

The Canadian senator said that Canadians are interested in investing in Iran.

Iran, Poland Sign Letter of Understanding

Tehran Times Service

TERHAN - The visiting Polish Minister of Regional Planning and Construction Ms. Barbara Blida and the Iranian Minister of Housing and Urban Development Abbas Ahmad Akhundi in their meeting here on Saturday inked a letter of understanding on exchange of experience in the sectors of housing and urban construction projects.

In the meeting, the two sides agreed on encouraging the two countries' private sectors and engineering companies to participate in either countries' construction plans, IRNA reported.

While here the Polish minister met and conferred with the Iranian ministers of Commerce Yahya Al-e Eshaq, of Industries Mohammad-Reza Nematzadeh and of Foreign Ministry Ali Akbar Velayati. She also met and discussed with some of the women representatives of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis).

During her stay in Tehran she also inspected some under construction residential units and building materials factories.

Qatar Reaps Oil Bonanza

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - A sudden surge in oil output is helping ease Qatar's cash flow problems until it starts reaping the rewards from liquefied natural gas (LNG) production, economists and bankers said in Doha.

The oil bonanza will reduce the Persian Gulf state's deficit accumulated from borrowing heavily from international banks to develop its off-shore north field, the world's largest proven reserves of LNG, an AFP dispatch reported.

The Persian Gulf Arab state's oil production rose from 390,000 barrels per day in 1995 to 470,000 bpd in March 1996 and will reach "a little bit over 500,000 barrels per day" at the end of the year, the emir's economic advisor Ibrahim Boutros Ibrahim said.

Qatar seeks to boost oil output to 700,000 bpd by the year 2000.

Oil industry executives said the Qatar General Petroleum Company has boosted its own production by raising capacity at the on-shore Dukhan field to 280,000 bpd, with 100,000 bpd more from two off-shore fields.

The U.S. company Occidental raised its off-shore production at the Idd Al-Shargi field from 20,000 bpd in 1994 to 70,000 bpd this year.

The Danish firm Maersk boosted production at the Al-Shaheen field from 25,000 bpd to 40,000 to 50,000 bpd in three years.

By early next year, the U.S. firm ARCO will produce 30,000 bpd at Al-Rayan and Elf Aquitaine of France is to start pumping oil from the Al-Khaleej field with a similar output target.

The simultaneous rise in the price of oil, which has hit around 22 dollars per barrel, provides an unexpected windfall as the 1996-97 budget unveiled in April was based on a price of 15.5 dollars per barrel, the banker said.

The additional revenue should reduce the projected deficit of 960 million dollars or maybe even eliminate it, the banker said.

"My estimate is that this year there will be no deficit, which doesn't mean we won't have one next year," said Ibrahim, who is an advisor to the emir, Sheikh Hamad ibn Khalifa al-Thani.

The priority remains to put public finances back in order through cutting spending in order to balance the budget permanently over the next two or three years while waiting for the gas revenues, the emir's advisor said.

Qatar Liquefied Gas Company (Qatargas) plans to export its first shipment of LNG, to Japan in December, and to produce six million tons a year by 2001.

Ras Laffan Liquefied Natural Gas Co. (Rasgas) is expected to begin producing 2.4 million tons of LNG a year 1999 for export to South Korea.

Revenue from the lng exports will be used for a long period to pay off debts owed to international banks to develop the north field, whose gas reserves are estimated at 10 trillion cubic meters (350 trillion cubic feet).

The oil revenues will help Qatar make ends meet, the banker said.

A diplomat added: "that's bound to increase the cash flow and it's going to have a real impact on the economy.

"The payment record is going to improve drastically. There are instructions filtering (out) that payments should not exceed one or two days. Delays now stand at six months to a year," he added.

The reconciliation announced October 20 between the emir and his father Sheikh Khalifa, who has been in exile since his son toppled him in a bloodless palace coup last year, has "helped stabilize the government," a banker said.

"The atmosphere has eased a lot," a European diplomat said.

The emir last month decided to halt lawsuits against Sheikh Khalifa in return for his settling billions of dollars in missing state funds, in a move that could also provide an added boost to state coffers.

No details of the deal have been released, however.

UAE Says No Major Concessions to WTO

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - The United Arab Emirates (UAE) said on Sunday it had made no major concessions to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), maintaining curbs on foreign firms seeking business in the Persian Gulf country.

In a paper presented to a seminar in Abu Dhabi, the Economy and Commerce Ministry said the government would keep a 10-year-old ban on licences for new foreign banks and would not remove restrictions on foreign ownership, AFP reported.

"Regarding obligations towards the services sector, the UAE has not made major commitments when it joined the WTO... the concessions made concern a small number of services and were according to conditions that protect the vital economic interests of the country," the paper said.

It said there would be no change in the existing laws preventing new foreign banks from opening branches in the UAE or operating banks and other financial institution from expanding their activities.

Foreign companies seeking business in the emirates must also do so through a joint venture, in which UAE nationals should own at least 51 percent.

"Foreigners and foreign companies are also not allowed to own land or property in the UAE while foreign services firms will not be permitted to recruit labor from abroad except a maximim 50 percent of their specialized employees and administrative managers," the ministry said.

It stressed the UAE's membership of the Geneva-based WTO "does not constitute a heavy burden on the country or create any difficulties but rather it provides it with enough flexibility to benefit from world trade."

The UAE, a major OPEC oil producer, joined WTO in 1994, when more than 100 countries signed a landmark agreement in Morocco to open up trade.

Officials and experts have said the deal would boost economic growth worldwide and open new markets for exports by developing nations.

The UAE study said global reductions in import tariffs under the WTO deal, which replaced the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT), would benefit the country's exports of petrochemicals and ready-made garments.

It said the accord would also dissuade the United States and other countries from imposing quotas on the UAE's garment exports.

The study ruled out any impact on the UAE's commercial links with its five partners in the 15-year-old Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC)— Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman. "The WTO rules allow the UAE to receive and provide a preferential treatment in its trade with the PGCC states."

Flood Inflicts Rls.60bn in Damage in Mazandaran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Based on the latest statistical reports, recent floods have inflicted Rls. 60 billion in damage on five cities and 90 villages of Mazandaran Province, the manager of the provincial natural disaster headquartes Rahmatollah Ahmadi said on Saturday.

The official added that some 10,030 residential units, 239 development and infrastructure projects, 4500 hectares of farmland, four warehouses and six poultry farms have been damaged and six people in the cities of Sari, Babol and Neka lost their lives, IRNA reported.

He added that the provincial cities of Sari, Babolsar, Fereidun Kenar, Babol, Qaem Shahr and Neka were among the cities hit by the floods.

Two villages and some part of Fereidun Kenar are now under water, he added

Oman Inaugurates Natural Gas Plant

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Sultan Qaboos of Oman inaugurated on Saturday the construction of a 1.2-billion-dollar liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant as part of a plan to reduce the country's dependence on oil exports.

"The construction of the liquefied natural gas plant falls within a six-billion dollar project, which should generate 24 billion dollars for the sultanate over the next 25 years," Oman's Oil Minister Said ibn Ahmed al-Shanfari said at the ceremony in Muscat, as reported by AFP.

He said that several international financial institutions had provided loans covering 80 percent of the cost of the project.

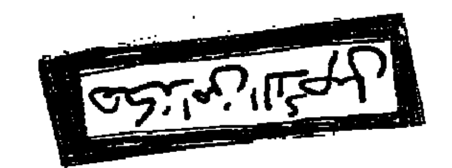
Oman awarded a contract on Thursday to a consortium made up of the Japanese company Chiyoda and the U.S. firm Foster Wheeler for the construction of the LNG plant.

The plant is being built at Al-Galila, near the port of Sur on the Gulf of Oman, and is to be operational in 1999, with annual production of 6.6 million tons of lng, the official Omani News Agency (ONA) said.

Oman, which has oil reserves expected to run out in the next 20 years, is to begin exporting LNG to South Korea in 2000 and to Thailand in 2003.

Contrary to oil exploration, the production of natural gas requires huge investments which require long-term purchase contracts to be economically viable.

Oman's natural gas reserves are estimated at 750 billion cubic meters (about 26 trillion cubic feet).

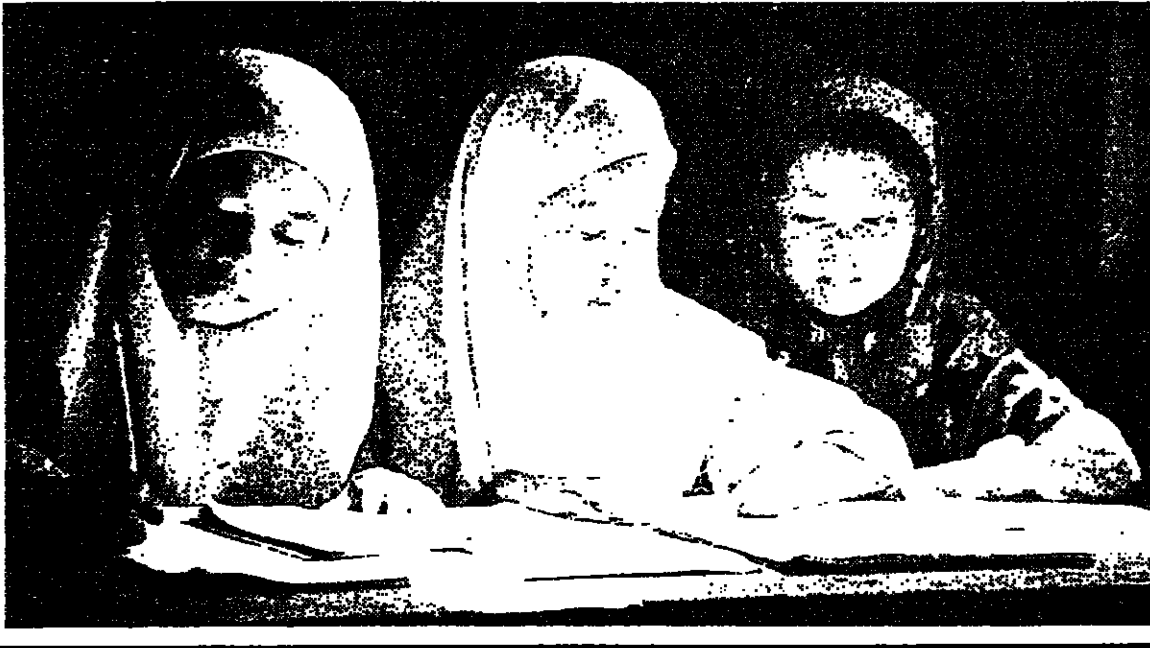


Women's Education: Key to Empowerment

Part 2

The educational gains for girls and women at all levels were impressive. The world adult female illiteracy rate fell from 45 percent in 1960 to 35 percent in 1985. Female enrollment in primary schools in the developing world was as high as 44 percent by 1980, up by 7 percent from 1950. Near universal primary school enrollment had been attained in Latin America and much of Asia. Girl's enrollment in secondary schools increased from 24 percent in 1950 to 40 percent in 1980.

Throughout this entire period, women continued to close the gap with men, not only in secondary school enrollment but also in university. Today there are more women than men enrolled in higher education in several countries, according to UNESCO sources. For instance, in 1990 in Qatar there were 202 women per 100 men; likewise, in Lesotho 172 per 100, in Mongolia 149 per 100 in Panama 136 per 100, in Bulgaria 124 per 100, and in Portugal 113 per 100. Yet, the gap between male and female literacy rates grew as illiteracy rate for men fell faster than for women, highlighting the fact that access to education continued to be easier for males than for females.



Women have also made great progress in the teaching profession and, after decades of improvement, half or more of first-level teachers around the world (excluding Africa) are women. In Asia and the Pacific, 49 percent of first-level teachers are now women, compared to 38 percent in 1970; in Africa, 39 percent are now women, compared to 28 percent in 1970.

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The Effects of the Economic Crisis on Education

The economic crisis of the 1980s and the remedial structural adjustment programs adopted by the developing countries under the auspices of international financial institutions abruptly slowed and in some instances, actually reversed the steady progress of preceding decades. Pre-existing inequalities experienced by women worsened during the economic crisis and women suffered disproportionately from the cuts in education. Rapid population growth also contributed to the rise in the total number of illiterate women—a trend which is expected to continue into the twenty-first century.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the world's least developed countries slashed their education budgets by 25 percent per capita during the 1980s in order to deal with the debt crisis; Latin America and the Caribbean effected the largest cuts. in Jamaica, per capita real expenditure on education was cut by about one third from 1980 to 1985. Bolivia and Costa Rica cut their education expenditures by over 45 and 41 percent respectively.

The deterioration of education programs became most acute in many African nations which had made great strides after achieving independence. Some countries virtually eliminated education from their budgets: Zaire, one of the world's poorest countries with one of the highest illiteracy rates, slashed its education budget from 15.2 percent of total expenditure in 1972 to 0.8 percent in 1986. As school buildings and equipment decayed, teacher's salaries were devalued up to ten times as a result of spiralling inflation, and school fees were introduced in many countries. The dramatic fall in per capita income often meant that parents could not afford the transportations costs or the school supplies their children required. Reports of schools operating without desks, blackboards, slates or books became common; some African communities, in a desperate attempt to provide even a minimum of learning for their children, created makeshift outdoor schools with volunteer teachers, most of whom were women.

The impact of the global economic crisis and subsequent effects at adjustment on the availability and quality of education has yet to be assessed, but as Adebayo Adedeji, former Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, recently warned, "If things continue like this, Africa will have more illiterate people as a proportion of the population than at independence" — a scenario which will have disastrous consequences for the continent's fut... ...or, as Adejiji put it: "how can you develop an illiterate society?"

During the 1980s, as a result of the economic crisis:

* Some 16 low-income and 14 middle-income countries with ongoing structural adjustment programs experienced falling ratios of primary school enrollment. In the first category, female enrollments were most severely affected in Somalia, Togo and Mali where rates fell by 40, 18 and 15 percent respectively. In the second Category, Yemen, Chile and Costa Rica were most affected.
* Improvements in secondary education enrollments slowed down in much of Asia and Africa, and in several countries there was a lower enrollment for girls than for boys among the poorer strata of society.
* In six Latin American countries, education deteriorated both in quantitative and qualitative terms.
* Drop-out rates increased in several countries as a result of introduction of school fees.



If you educate a man, you educate one person; if you educate a woman, you educate an entire family.

Girls are often the first to suffer from these set-backs since female education is not a priority among families, local communities and governments. If a family is to choose which child will continue its education, preference is invariably given to boys, in the belief that their chances for employment is better than girls'. Hard-press parents also tend to take their girls out of school to help them with domestic work and child care, or else to marry them off. In addition, rapid population growth and shrinking education budgets in many developing countries mean that there are not enough schools to accommodate the school-age population, which expanded by a staggering 35 per cent between 1970 and 1985. Again girls are the first to be excluded. *(To be contd)*

Protestors: Miss World Contest Reduces Women to Set of Numbers

NEW DELHI, India - Organizers of the Miss World Beauty Contest said last Wednesday they have decided to move the pageant to Seychelles next year because of business reasons, but the move apparently was triggered by protests in India.

Protestors say the Miss World Contest demeans women and reduces them to a set of numbers. Local feminists say the contest's swimsuit portion goes against Indian culture and values.

"It makes more sense to hold it in the Seychelles," said Manohar Arcot, General Manager of the Amitabh Bachchan Corp. Ltd., which has two-year rights to the beauty pageant and had planned to hold it in the southern Indian city of Bangalore both years.

"We are a business organization and the viability is important," Arcot said in a telephone interview. The government of Seychelles had offered the group a guarantee of $5.3 million to hold the pageant there.

Protests from Indian leftist and right-wing groups, however, forced the organizers to move next month's controversial swimsuit sections - which were to be held in Agra, Jaipur and Madras - to the Seychelles. Most Indians frown on people wearing skimpy clothes and few women in the subcontinent would dare to be seen in a swimsuit.

The group, which is owned by India's top film star, Amitabh Bachchan, is going ahead with this year's pageant in Bangalore, unmindful of rising protests, Arcot said.

"The Karnataka government has categorically assured us that we will have no cause for concern. They have assured us all protection," he said.

The state government says that although Bangalore will benefit little economically from the pageant, it hopes the publicity will lure more foreign investors to the city, popularly known as India's Silicon valley for its numerous computer software companies.

The student wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party, India's largest opposition group, said it would not allow the contest to be held anywhere in India. The group plans a series of protests beginning next week, said M.H. Sridhar, an activist. "We will oppose the contest at all costs," said M.D. Nanjundaswamy, a feisty farmers' leader who successfully led protests against Multinationals Fast Food Chain KFC and Seed Manufacturer Cargill Inc. (AP)

Unknown Organization Threatens Miss World Contest Viewers

NEW DELHI — An unknown organization calling itself "Indian Tigers" has threatened to attack those viewing the Miss World Beauty Pageant '96, to be held later this month in Bangalore, capital of the southern Indian state of Karnataka.

A statement from the Indian Tigers, received here by various newspapers offices and news agencies said "Those who purchase the tickets for viewing the contest should be ready to risk their limbs and lives".

"Poor, toiling and working class had the rights to attack the viewers, said the release adding that Indian Tigers will reward each attack by paying Indian rs. 1000.

This mysterious organization has also claimed the responsibility for attacks on the office of Miss World Organizers, Amitabh Bachhan Corporation Limited (ACCI) and throwing country-made bomb at the pageant venue about a week ago.

With the date of the holding of the Miss World event drawing nearer, it seems that Bangalore is heading for a close showdown between the organizers and the state government on one side and the anti-contest activists on the other.

Instead of police, the commandos of Border Security Force (BSF), National Security Guards (NSG), paramilitary forces and Women Rapid Action Force (WRAF) have been assigned to the task of providing Security to the event. Whereas, agitators have threatened to unleash violence, even sending suicide squads to the venue stadium, to stop the event. (IRNA)

Anger At Indonesian Vice-President's Women Comments

JAKARTA - Indonesian women's groups on Friday condemned comments by Vice President Try Sutrisno that a woman's place was in the home.

"Working women should not forget their destiny of being a mother in a household," Sutrisno told a national conference on working women on Thursday, the Jakarta Post reported.

He said working women should "strike a balance between the two facets of their lives," and realize that the "quality" of their household chores was bound to be lower than if they had jobs.

More than 37 million Indonesian women have jobs, nearly 50 percent of the women of working age, according to government figures. In 1988 only 16.9 million women, or 33 percent of those of working age, were in employment.

The country is overwhelmingly Muslim, but women's groups condemned Sutrisno's comments as a way to justify wage disparity between men and women.

"The government has a gender ideology which means women always have to have one foot in the home and one in the public sphere. Women are not seen as bread winners," Ita Nadia of the Kalyanamitra group told AFP.

Nadia said the policy had been "exploited by industry to use women as cheap labour."

"Because she is not defined as the breadwinner, she will never be paid the same," Nadia said.

The Minister of Health, Sujudi, said last Thursday that around 30 percent of working women suffer from anemia caused by malnutrition, which contributed to a 20 percent loss in productivity. (AFP)

First Woman Mayor Appointed

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Mayor of Tehran, Gholam-Hussein Karbaschi, here Sunday appointed Zahra Sadr-Azam Nouri as the mayor of Tehran's 7th district.

Nouri, the first women mayor throughout the Iranian history, assumed office on Sunday.

She has already served as managing director of Khavaran Culture House, southeastern Tehran.

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Women Crack Acapulco's Famed Cliff-Diving Competition

ACAPULCO, Mexico — On dares, for kicks and for prizes, men have been diving from a cliff into a sea-filled chasm here for decades. Until now, women simply watched one of Mexico's great rituals of 'machismo.'

But in the demise of another gender barrier, women went fur prize money for the first time Saturday in the world-renowned Acapulco cliff-diving championships.

It was part equal-opportunity, part marketing inspiration. Organizers hoped the presence of female divers would rejuvenate the event after a three-year hiatus.

The money wasn't enormous: dlrs 6,000 apiece for the winners of separate men's and women's divisions. But this was mainly about bragging rights. Most of the competitors hoped to boost their marquee value as divers on the amusement-park circuit.

On Saturday, six American and Canadian women jumped from the cliffs of this Pacific resort city, 180 miles (290 kilometers) southwest of Mexico City, into a churning gorge known as 'La Quebrada', or 'the break'. The 27 men taking part were to compete Sunday.

Heidi Pascoe took first place on two cleanly executed dives from 68 feet (21 meters) - a forward-double somersault with a half-twist and a flying one-and-a-half somersault.

"I went up the cliff to do my best, and if the best takes me to the top so be it," said Pascoe, 24, of the United States. "I bowed my head and prayed. I'm pretty proud of myself."

The women were following a pioneer named Barbara Winter. In 1977, she performed well in practice rounds at Acapulco but was refused permission to compete against men in the finals.

The men in the Acapulco Cliff Divers' Union, who set the rules for the event, put aside their doubts this year on the advice of producer-promoter Sam Hernandez.

"The local divers were apprehensive at first because they respect women and didn't want to see one hurt," said Hernandez, who was the only American to win the annual competition twice during its first incarnation from 1967 to 1993.

But Hernandez said that after canvassing a small cadre of international women professionals, he decided 'it was time to bring it into the 21st century and have women represented'.

La Quebrada is no small leap for man or woman.

From atop a tiny platform 87 feet (27 meters) high, the ribbon of sea water below seems light-years away. Divers watch tidal swells fill the chasm, count off a couple of seconds and spring into the air. Two seconds later they hit water that varies from seven feet to 15 feet (two to five meters) deep at a top speed of 65 mph (105 kph).

They come up smiling, but that first step is a big one.

On Thursday, U.S. competitor Montana Miller took one look and balked. But on Friday the 26-year-old hit a picture-perfect head-first practice dive from a height of 68 feet (21 meters).

"Yesterday I couldn't do it, but today I could. I'm so proud of myself I could give myself a big hug," Miller said Friday. She went on to finish sixth Saturday.

Olympic diving platforms are about half as high at 10 meters, or 33 feet. Dives at Acapulco are judged on artistry, height and technical difficulty. Women were allowed, but not required, to jump from the top, there are two intermediate heights.

"You have to jump way out to miss hitting the rocks," said Miller, who had dived from an 80-foot (24-meter) platform into 9 feet (3 meters) of water but had never taken the plunge from a cliff before the weekend. "In ladder diving, going forward is the last thing you want to do or you'll miss the tank."

Raul Garcia was eight years old when he made his first cliff dive in 1936, at a time when many kids were taking the plunge on a dare. It was a man's world then, and he says he would keep it that way.

"We don't want to lose the mystique," said Garcia, 68.

But the new contestants only added to La Quebrada's legend.

Americans Dustin and Becca Webster took the plunge together for a second time Friday. The Websters' synchronized dive re-enacted a 1991 wedding ceremony in which they said "I do" and leapt 70 feet (21 meters) into a small tank in a Los Angeles amusement park.

American Lucy Streeter, who finished third, was here to cap a career after earning what is thought to be the women's high-diving world record at just over 120 feet (37 meters) in 1985 in Hong Kong.

"It has been a macho thing with guys not wanting to see women go off (the cliff)," Streeter said, adding that she will probably retire after the weekend. "And maybe it would look bad. Maybe we would show them up a bit." (AP)



MILAN, Italy (Nov. 16): Argentinian player Gabriel Batistuta of Fiorentina and Inter Milan's Massimo Paganin clash in the air during ther SErie A match in Milan. (AFP PHOTO)

Symonds Blasts Quickfire Century to Put Queensland On Top

SYDNEY — Andrew Symonds, who turned his back on an opportunity of playing test cricket for England, led Queensland to a first innings lead over new south wales with an aggressive century on the second day of their Sheffield Shield Cricket Match here Saturday.

Symonds belted 105 in 100 minutes after tea and was caught on the fence for a sensational 111, 82 of which were plundered in boundaries, including three massive sixes.

His 99-ball innings in 132 minutes and Trevor Barsby's entertaining 79, assisted by four missed catches and a missed stumping pushed queensland to 330 all out, a first innings lead of 34.

In two overs before the close, nsw were four without loss.

Symonds went to tea on six with queensland 166 for three, but within just over an hour and a half after returning from the break, he had blasted his way to a century off only 93 balls.

In Melbourne, Victoria's Darren Berry was the centre of attention as his side crushed South Australia on the second day of their Shield Match at the MCG.

Berry equalled the Australian first-class record for the most dismissals by a keeper in an innings with eight and scored 47 in Victoria's first innings. Veteran Dean Jones topscored with 152.

Victoria declared their first innings just before lunch Saturday on 345 for nine and then rolled the reigning Shield Champions for 84 to take control of the game.

Victorian Captain Shane Warne enforced the follow-on and at the close sa were 44 without loss, with Ben Johnson 19 and Adam Kimber 14. (AFP)

SHARJAH, United Arab Emirates (Nov. 15): Pakistan captain Wassim Akram celebrates the fall of New Zeland's 9th wicket during the final match of the Singer Champions Trophy in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Pakistan won by 41 runs. (AFP PHOTO)

Figure Skating-Lalique Trophy

PARIS — Even on off days, world champions Michelle Kwan and Todd Eldredge showed they still are good enough to win.

Kwan won the Women's Competition at the Lalique Trophy Figure Skating Competition Saturday and Eldredge won the Men's Event. Both did better in winning world titles in Edmonton, Alberta, last March.

Kwan won the free skating with a routine that was a bit less than what would normally please her.

"I wasn't very happy, but I was satisfied," Kwan said. "I had a little bobble here and there, but I fought to the end."

"Each performance that I do, you have to learn from it and hope to do better next time," Eldredge said.

Still, it was the second victory of the season for each, following wins at the Skate America.

Kwan, of Torrance, Calif., completed six triple jumps but wobbled on a two jumps and scaled down another.

"Sometimes you are not perfect in the air and you can't do anything about it," she said. "You fight and hope you land."

Her routine to east Indian music still earned her marks mostly in the 5.7- to-5.9 range on a scale of 6.0.

"I chose the music because it is very powerful and pushes me through the program," Kwan said.

She has named the routine 'Taj Mahal', after the fabled Indian Palace a king built for his queen.

Second was Maria Butyrskaia of Russia, whose artistry rivaled Kwan's. Tara Lipinski, a 14-year-old from the United States, was third.

Lipinski was second last week to European Champion Irina Slutskaya of Russia at Skate Canada.

Eldredge was a bit off from his top performance at Edmonton when he used a brilliant routine to take the world title.

He did seven triples but messed up one jump combination at the start.

"I got a little too close to the boards. When I went to toe pick, my toe slipped out and I just hopped in the air," Eldredge said.

He had to improvise another triple axel combination in the middle of the routine.

Second-place Viacheslav Zagorodniuk of Ukraine and third-place Michael Weiss of the United States both did eight triples but lacked the flair of Eldredge.

Eldredge was challenged by European champion Zagorodniuk in the technical marks but Eldredge's routine to music from 'Independence Day' earned him the better marks in presentation and style, all 5.8s and 5.9s compared to the Ukrainian's 5.7s and 5.8s

Elvis Stojko, the 1994 and 1995 world champion, was scheduled to compete but withdrew friday because of food poisoning.

Oksana Kazakova and Artur Dmitriev of Russia moved from third to first to win the pairs event. With an error-free routine and a superior style than the other couples, they moved past Jenni Meno and Todd Sand of the United States, who led after Friday's short program, worth one-third the score.

Dmitriev and Kazakova are the current European champions. He won the olympics in 1992 with Natasha Mishkutienok.

Meno and Sand, the three-time United States champions, did not attempt the difficult maneuvers that the Russians put in.

"I fractured my wrist and we only started to do lifts and twists 10 days ago," meno said. "So we concentrated on the jumps. It the first time we completed triple toe loops in both the short and long programs in a competition."

Third went to another Russian pair, Elena Bereznaia and Anton Sikharulidze. Bereznaia returned to competition after getting a severe head injury when she was kicked in the head last January during a skating practice.

Marina Anissina and Gwendel Peizerat of France took the ice dance event but the surprise of the night was the second place of Elizabeth Punsalan and Jerod Swallow.

The Americans, under Russian coach Igor Shpilband, showed improvement since last year when they were seventh in the world championships. They had a intricate routine to a upbeat Latin music punctuated by unique moves on high trumpet notes.

Punsalan and Swallow beat Irina Romanova and Igor Yaroshenko of Ukraine for third. The Ukraine dancers were third at the Europeans championships.

The Lalique Trophy is the third of the six-meet champions series that leads up to the Grand Prix Final at Hamilton, Ontario, at the end of February. The event brings together the top six scorers in the men's, women's, ice dance and pairs events.

First place in a competition is worth dlrs 30,000. The next scheduled competition of the champion series is in Germany next week. (AP)

Tyson Wants a Rematch to Remember

NEW YORK — Mike Tyson is anxious for a rematch of the fight he says he can't remember losing.

"I don't remember anything after the third round," Tyson said Saturday about his 11th-round WBA heavyweight title loss to Evander Holyfield.

Tyson said his loss of memory occurred after a collision of heads in the third round and his head didn't clear until the post-fight news conference.

Holyfield said he couldn't tell Tyson was fighting in a fog, but he said something similar happened to him when he was an amateur and that he accepts Tyson's story.

The two men talked about the fight and answered questions from a panel of boxing writers for a taping of a show about the match to be telecast Sunday by the American TV cable channel showtime. Holyfield and the writers were in a New York studio. Tyson was at his home at Southington township, Ohio, because his parole officer would not allow him to travel to New York.

"I'm looking forward to a rematch in March," Tyson said.

But the 34-year-old Holyfield said that would be too soon. "I know my body," Holyfield said. (AP)



Mykonos Court, Puppet in Hands of International Zionism

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Islamic Propagation Coordinating Council (IPCC) here Sunday strongly condemned the German federal prosecutor for insulting the most senior Iranian officials saying that the Mykonos Court is a puppet serving the interests of international Zionism.

A statement issued by the council said that the first condition for independence of judiciary is to avoid being influenced by political games and that its decisions should be based on documentary evidence and information.

The statement said that political, social and judicial trends in Germany over the past years indicate that human rights is violated in this country.

It added that indifference of the German Judiciary to violation of human rights acknowledges that as a puppet in the hands of the arrogant powers and the international Zionism the German officials spare no effort to materialize the inhuman objectives of those circles.

The prosecutor of the Mykonos Court, relying on baseless allegations of anti-national agents with criminal records of hostility, and treachery against the Iranian people, has questioned the ideals and values of the Islamic Revolution by insulting Iranian senior officials, the statement noted.

It added that the Iranian nation has not yet forgotten the treachery of German government during the eight-year imposed war by providing the Iraqi aggressors with weapons of mass destruction and other chemical weapons and that the German government has to share the blame for the onslaught of innocent Iranian people by the Iraqi regime during the war.

The Iranians call on international community to review this criminal act of the German government on the basis of international law to prosecute the culprits as war criminals, it said.

The Islamic Propagation Coordinating Council underlined that the German government would not dare to insult the Iranian officials if it had received a befitting reply from Iran when it insulted the Information Minister, Ali Fallahiyan.

The statement added that such a shameless phenomenon is probably another manifestation of the so-called new world order which targets genuine ideals of Islam.

In conclusion the statement noted that Islam as the religion of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (S) opposes any compromise on principles and that the Muslims will not calm down until the freedom of Qods and Al-Aqsa Mosque from the hands of criminal Zionists.

Palestinian Prisoners Call Hunger Strike

Bait-ul-Moqaddas — Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails were to hold a day-long hunger strike on Sunday to protest the "worsening" living conditions in which they are held, the Palestinian daily *Al-Quds* reported.

The prisoners club, a Palestinian rights group, said in a statement quoted by the paper that it had received "numerous reports from prisoners that conditions are worsening in every way" in Israeli prisons.

"It had become necessary to face the prisons administration policy, which has launched a vicious and inhuman campaign against Palestinian prisoners," the group said of the planned strike.

Prison authorities have ignored prisoners demands for "better health conditions."

The strike follows protests by human rights groups against an Israeli supreme court decision to allow interrogators to use "physical pressure" against a Palestinian suspected of having information about an upcoming anti-Zionist bombing.

The decision "encourages torture," charged the UN rapporteur on torture Peter Thomas Burns on Friday, adding that Israel was the only country in the world which had "legal" use of torture.

Israeli law allows "moderate physical pressure" when interrogating Palestinians and "heightened physical pressure" when the prisoner is suspected of knowing about a possible attack. (AFP)

UN to Set Up Iraqi Camp for Turkish Kurd Refugees

BAGHDAD — The United Nations is to set up a camp in northern Iraq for Turkish Kurd refugees who fled fighting in their own country but who now want to return home, a UN source said Sunday.

"This camp will be established soon near the town of Zakho (near the Turkish border in northwest Iraq) and should initially welcome some 900 Turkish Kurd refugees who live in northern Iraq in order to prepare them for a return to their villages in Turkey," the UN source said.

The return of the refugees would be on a voluntary basis, the source added.

The refugees have fled fighting in southeast Turkey between the Turkish Army and the separatist group the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) which has intensified since September.

The number of Turkish Kurd refugees in northern Iraq, controlled by Iraqi Kurd factions, is not known but around 14,000 live further south in another camp in Atrush, near the town of Dahuk.

Turkish authorities complain that refugees in the camp, run by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, are supporters of the PKK which is fighting an armed campaign for a homeland in southeast Turkey.

The fighting has claimed more than 22,500 lives since 1984. (AFP)

Israeli Consul Meets Alleged Spy Held in Egypt

CAIRO — Israel's consul in Egypt visited on Sunday an Israeli citizen jailed near here on charges of spying for the Zionist state, an Israeli Embassy spokesman told AFP.

Consul Joshua Gabhay, who had been on vacation in Israel, went to Tora Prison south of Cairo to check on Azzam's health and the conditions of his detention, the spokesman said.

Israel public radio reported that Azzam, an Israeli Druze who had been working at the Cairo factory of an Israeli textile firm, told Gabhay he was innocent of the spying charges.

Azzam was accused of spying after an Egyptian employee at his company, Emad Ismail, was arrested and told interrogators he had furnished the Israeli with information in exchange for money.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was cited by the government press Saturday as saying that the affair has been turned over to the judicial authorities.

"We don't intervene in judicial affairs," he said.

Mubarak told Israeli television Thursday that the affair could be settled by discreet contacts with Israel.

"If we could choose, we would create some distance from the television cameras. The Israelis have arrested Egyptians (suspected of spying) in the past, and we haven't shrieked at the top of our lungs," he said. (AP)

Lebanese Official Denies Envoys Carrying Arad Evidence to Germany

BEIRUT — A Lebanese official Sunday denied a report that the government was sending envoys to Germany with evidence that missing Israeli pilot Ron Arad is still alive.

"Lebanon has no intention of sending emissaries" to meet German secret services coordinator Bernd Schmidbauer, who is mediating between Israel and the Hezbollah, said the official who asked for anonymity.

The British daily the *Independent* on Sunday said the Lebanese envoys would bring fingerprint proof to German authorities Sunday that Arad was still alive.

"The most important prisoner swap between Israel and its Arab enemies in over a decade may be approaching as two Lebanese government officials fly to Germany this weekend with what they say are the fingerprints of Ron Arad an Israeli airman whom many had long given up dead," the newspaper said.

"The prints will be forwarded to Israel by the head of the German secret service Bernd Schmidbauer who is expected to meet the two *Lebanese today," it said.*

The newspaper said Israel is ready to free two leading members of Lebanese movements, Abdel Karim Obeid and Mustapha Dirani, and 33 other Muslims being held in Israeli prison.

On Saturday the pro-Syrian Lebanese newspaper *Al-Sharq* said information had been conveyed in the past few days to the German government that Arad was still alive and that efforts by the Hezbollah movement to locate him had been successful.

Germany organized an exchange of bodies and prisoners between the Zionist state and Hezbollah in July and Israel also asked it to find information on Arad and three other Israeli soldiers who disappeared in Lebanon and are believed to be dead.

Arad was shot down over southern Lebanon 10 years ago, and is the only one of six missing Israeli servicemen still thought by Israel to be alive and in detention.

Israel kidnapped Dirani from the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley in 1994, to get information on Arad while Obeid, a prominent Hezbollah clergyman, was abducted by Israeli troops in 1989. (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

SACKED...

Murtaza Bhutto, estranged younger brother of Benazir, and seven of his colleagues were killed in a reported shootout between police and his guards here on September 27.

President Farooq Leghari sacked Bhutto and dissolved the National Assembly in November, accusing her government of massive corruption, misrule, economic mismangement and lawlessness leading to the thousands of extra-judicial killings in Karachi and other parts of the country.

Before addressing party activists and supporters near her seaside Bilawal house residence, Bhutto led a long procession of vehicles after arriving here from Islamabad Saturday, on a first visit to her home province of Sindh since her ouster.

Murtaza's supporters have accused Bhutto's detained husband, Asif Ali Zardari, of a role in his killing and clashed with Bhutto party activists during Saturday's procession. Several people were injured in the clashes.

Bhutto told the rally that her brother's killing was a "conspiracy" to topple her government and alleged that "Leghari is involved directly or indirectly."

"Leghari come and answer," she said.

"Oppressors cannot succeed, victory belongs to the people," Bhutto said, adding : "I swear I will stand by the people of Pakistan for the rest of my life."

Last week, Bhutto challenged her dimissal in a writ filed with the Supreme Court in Islamabad.

Bhutto claimed her government had restored peace in Karachi by defeating "terrorists." (AFP)

Ambassador: Ankara Attaches Importance to Ties With Tehran

TEHRAN — The new Turkish Ambassador in Iran, Osman Korturk, here Saturday stressed that his country attaches great importance to ties with Tehran.

Korturk made the remark when handing over copies of his credentials to Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati.

He added that further consolidation of Tehran-Ankara relations is the prime objective of his mission and expressed hope that bilateral cooperation will be further boosted.

The Iranian foreign minister stressed that friendly relations between the two countries promote regional peace and stability. (IRNA)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

MPS...

protesters also criticized certain German factories for having equipped and armed Iraq with weapons of mass destruction during its imposed war (1980-88) against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The protester called on the Iranian government to declare these factories as war criminals.

The Iraqi Army during its war against Iranian forces and the Iraqi people repeatedly used chemical weapons which were mostly supplied by German factories.

In the statement, the students called on the Iranian Foreign Ministry to downgrade Iran's political and economic ties with Germany to the lowest possible level. The marchers termed the U.S. imperialism as the main source of corruption and one behind all wars and troubles throughout the world.

In this connection, Ayatollah Yusof Sanei in Qom Sunday denounced the German court's statement against top Iranian officials.

He stressed that the U.S.-led global arrogance has repeatedly levelled such allegations against the Islamic Republic and its officials but to no avail.

Sanei added that the German judiciary will undoubtedly be repentant of its actions as 60 million committed Muslims oppose it.

(Contd from Pg. 1)

OVERNIGHT...

He said the two sides would meet again Sunday in Jericho to discuss "the issues of hot pursuit and armaments for the Palestinian police."

The Palestinians will also reiterate their demand the talks address other commitments by Israel under the 1995 Oslo self-rule accords left unimplemented, such as the opening of a Palestinian airport and the freeing of prisoners.

After high hopes last week that the two sides would reach an accord over the pull-out after more than a month of intense talks, negotiations snagged once more over Israel's demand for broad "hot pursuit" rights across Al-Khalil.

Israel wants wide rights for its soldiers to enter Palestinian areas of the city to hunt down suspected Palestinian radicals and prevent attacks against the 400 Jewish settlers in the city.

The Palestinians insist that any Israeli Army entry be coordinated with their security forces, saying unilateral "hot pursuit" rights violate the terms of self-rule as defined under the Oslo agreements.

Under the accords, Israel was to withdraw its troops from 85 percent of the city last March, concentrating its forces around Jewish enclaves. Palestinian police were to take up security in the majority of the city. (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

SYRIA...

jamin Netanyahu" and said it ignored the realities on the ground.

Rifkind's idea was put forward "at a time when the people of the Near East are waiting for more effective measures for the resumption of the peace process," *Tishrin* said.

Meanwhile, Syria on Sunday attacked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policy of "occupation" particularly in the West Bank town of Al-Khalil and said the situation in the Palestinian territories was explosive.

"The situation in the occupied territories is explosive because of the position and practices of Netanyahu's government on occupation and its refusal to implement the accords concluded between the previous Israeli government" and the Palestinians, the *Tishrin* said.

"The attempts to modify the Hebron (Al-Khalil) accord by imposing unfair and disgraceful conditions for the Palestinians clearly show Israel's lack of seriousness and its desire to continue the occupation" of Arab land, the paper said.

Talks have stalled over the long-delayed Israeli troop withdrawal from Al-Khalil and Israeli and Palestinian negotiators failed overnight to push forward the negotiations, officials in Gaza City said Sunday. (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

NATO...

The troops based in Bosnia will be backed up by rapid reaction units stationed in nearby countries like Hungary and Italy or on ships in the Adriatic, an informed source said. The units should total at least 5,000 men, Shalikashvili said. (AFP)



WEATHER

The Islamic Republic of Iran Meteorological Organization announced today's weather as follows:

Forecast for Tehran: Max. temp. 13°C Min. temp. 1°C

Partly cloudy

Warmest Point:
Minab 31°C

Coldest Point:
Khalkhal -8°C

Some cities of the world

Cities	Max. °C	Cities	Max. °C
Riyadh	27	Vienna	13
Istanbul	12	Moscow	–
Rome	17	Madrid	9
Athens	–	Abu Dhabi	27
London	9	Karachi	28
Paris	4	New Delhi	23
Frankfurt	–	Kuwait	27

24 Killed in India's Troubled Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India – At least 21 separatist activists and three other people died in separate clashes overnight in Indian-administered Kashmir, a Defense Ministry spokesman said here Sunday.

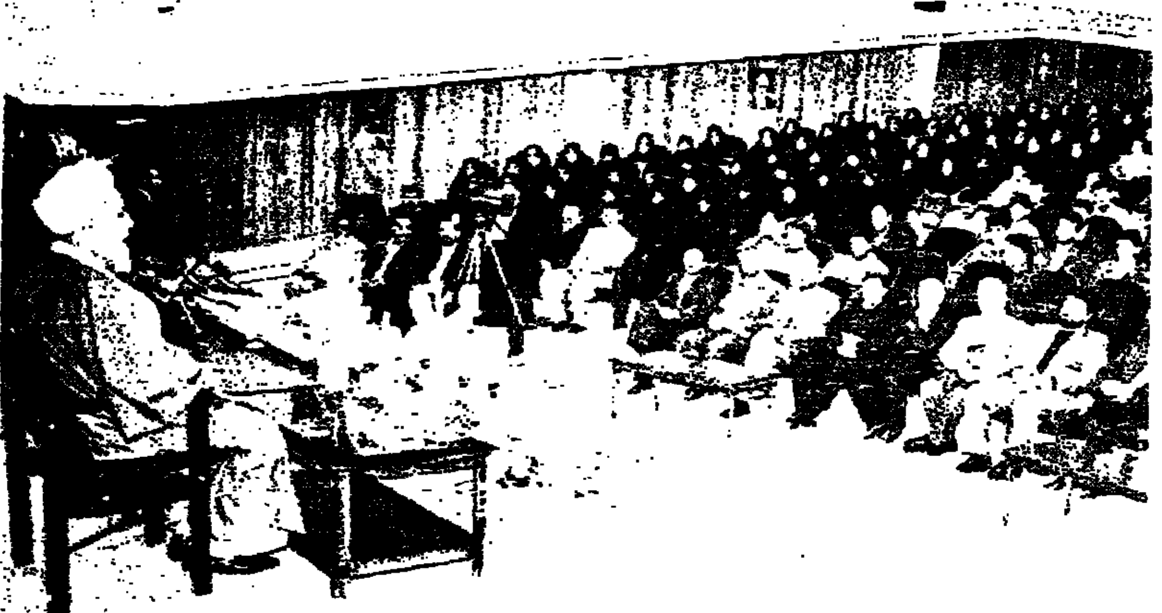
Indian soldiers also arrested 10 suspected activists in stepped-up search operations in the Himalayan region during the past 24 hours, he said.

Indian troops killed nine activists overnight in the frontier district of Kupwara and shot dead two others in a gunbattle in the district of Badgam, he said, adding a civilian held hostage by the activists also died in the clash.

Ten other fighters were killed by soldiers elsewhere in Kashmir, the spokesman said in state summer capital Srinagar and added a police officer and another civilian died in overnight separatist violence.

(AFP)

Enemies Try to Spread Indifference Among the Youth


Photo: Abbas Takin

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Majlis Speaker Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri said Saturday that the enemies of Islam leave no stone unturned to make the youth indifferent towards the Islamic teachings and values.

Speaking at the gathering of the staff of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) in Sanandaj, Kurdestan Province, the speaker underlined that the IRIB shoulders a heavy responsibility for thwarting the cultural plots of the enemies of the Islamic Revolution.

Nateq Nouri emphasized that, as the most sensitive strata of the society the youth needs guidance and that the country's cultural organizations should provide them with well-formulated programs and meet their spiritual needs.

He reiterated that in both rural and urban areas people closely follow the IRIB's programs adding that even slightest negligence in this organization will result in a tremendous cultural catastrophe.

Referring to the importance of cultural development in the society, Nateq Nouri said that the Majlis has paid due attention to the cultural sector as well as the IRIB during the Second Five-Year Development Plan.

He added that in addition to the annual budget of the cultural organizations, the Majlis has allocated a credit of 600 billion rials to them of which some 60 percent has been allocated to the IRIB.

Assembly Approves Oil Negotiations With China

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Iraq's National Assembly has approved a Chinese proposal to develop a new oil field as a step toward breaking the six-year UN embargo on Iraq, news reports said Sunday in Baghdad, as quoted by AP.

The decision was taken at a parliament meeting Saturday, according to the official Iraqi News Agency.

The agency, monitored by the BBC in London, quoted Munthir al-Alusi, chairman of the Assembly's Oil and Energy Committee, and Fayiz Abdullah, undersecretary of the Oil Ministry, as saying the assembly "reviewed the positive aspects and merits of the negotiations ... (and) considered them a step toward breaking the oppressive embargo imposed on Iraq."

Iraq previously concluded similar deals with French and Italian oil companies, but they will not begin operations until the sanctions are lifted. The Chinese also are expected to wait.

TEHRAN (Nov. 17) — Demonstrators stage rallies in front of German Embassy here protesting the statement of Mykonos court against Iranian officials.

Mojtaba Takin — Tehran Times

(Contd from Pg. 2)

HABIBI...

The Iranian first vice president and the Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani exchanged views on Saturday on the sidelines of the session of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Rabbani is heading an eight-member ranking delegation including Afghan minister of foreign affairs, to the FAO session at the invitation of the United Nations.

Habibi and the Italian Prime Minister Romani Prodi on Saturday exchanged views on the two countries' bilateral relations and regional developments.

Habibi on Saturday conferred with the Chinese Premier Li Peng, on Tehran-Beijing bilateral relations and regional and international developments.

In a meeting on Saturday between the Iranian first vice president and the Maltese new Prime Minister Alfred Sant, the two sides announced readiness to set up Iran-Malta Joint Economic Commission and parliamentary cooperation.

(Contd from Pg. 2)

AMBASSADORS...

settling a lasting peace in Tajikistan. President Rafsanjani hoped that stability in Tajikistan and restoration of peace in Afghanistan would pave the way for a trilateral cooperation among the three countries.

President Rafsanjani also received the new Turkish ambassador to Tehran Osman Korturk on Sunday.

In the meeting, the Turkish diplomat stressed that his country is willing to expand mutual ties with Islamic Iran.

He added that Iran and Turkey have shared border of peace and stability for centuries, and Turkey as a neighboring country with Iran is for further development of relations.

Korturk extended an invitation to President Rafsanjani for an official visit to Ankara on behalf of President Suleyman Demirel.

Emphasizing that the two countries enjoy high potentials to expand mutual relations, President Rafsanjani said that Iran and Turkey have always stressed the necessity of promoting bilateral ties.

He warned of foreign elements' efforts to mar Tehran-Ankara cordial relations and called on the two countries' political representatives to frustrate such plots.

(Contd from Pg. 5)

CHINA...

auto industry — also labelled a pillar of the economy — has hit hard times.

In recent weeks, China's top policymakers have already previewed the real estate promotion by emphasizing the positive effects of construction on the national economy.

"A boom in real estate development will have a trickle-down effect on more than 30 closely-related industries, including steel, cement, timber, chemicals and home appliances," Hou Jie, minister of construction, told the newspaper.

This policy is in marked contrast to policies of the last three years which have cramped construction growth because of a frenzy of development in the early nineties which sent inflation soaring and threatened to derail the economy.

"Much speculation has arisen that the three-year-long ice cap covering the sector may thaw in response to China's resumption of sovereignty over Hong Kong, which is expected to unleash another boom in capital investment," the newspaper said.

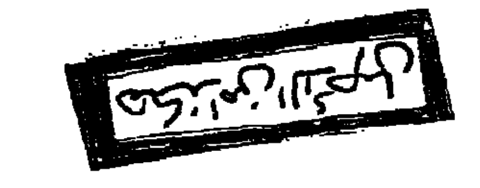
"Taking a cue from the crucial change in attitudes of top leaders, cities around the country have moved to spark market demand," it added.

But Lin Zengjie, professor of land manangement at the People's University, warned that change would have to come swiftly as this year's two interest rate cuts were already pushing money out of bank accounts and into the underground banking market, which has flourished during the last three years of tight credit.

"The interest rate cuts may hurt the sector if lack of investment options results in an underground banking market," Lin said.

The underground banking market charges' interest rates of around 18 percent on loans, compared to bank rates of less than 10 percent, and such massive interest charges are likely to stifle growth in the sector.

(AFP)



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Passengers Push Plane at Cairo Airport

CAIRO — Passengers on a Romanian aircraft, fed up after a five-hour delay at Cairo airport, got out and tried to push the plane into position for takeoff on Sunday.

The aircraft was not equipped with a hook that would have enabled a truck to pull it, and the airport authorities said they could not help the pilot.

After five hours of negotiations between the pilot and the authorities, passengers got out and tried to push the plane.

They made several futile attempts before the Romanian Airline official at the airport decided to put up them up at a hotel while waiting for the problem to be resolved. (AFP)

Father Detained After Daughter Killed

GENEVA — The father of 13-year-old Swiss girl who was killed when a parcel bomb exploded in a northern town has been remanded in custody, police said Sunday.

The girl's mother, who divorced the suspect in 1992, was injured in the blast at Buchs Friday.

The girl, Natja, was injured when she opened the parcel at their home while the mother was making a telephone call to a relative whose address had been on the parcel. The mother was still in hospital Sunday.

The girl died after being taken to hospital.

(AFP)

Italian PM Closes World Food Summit

ROME — The UN World Food Summit ended Sunday with Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi saying "It is only now that the real work begins."

Pope John Paul II had opened the summit Wednesday with a call for a change in thinking to get people to work together against hunger.

Eighty-six heads of state and government attended from among the 187 nations present.

The summit, whose main goal was to reduce malnutrition in the world by half by the year 2015, was dominated by the breaking news of hundreds of thousands of refugees risking starvation in eastern Zaire.

Zairean Vice Prime Minister Mulombo Bakafwa Nsenda had called Thursday at the summit's plenary session that he wanted international aid to be distributed in the refugees' home countries, not in Zaire.

Cuban President Fidel Castro delivered the most fiery speech of the summit on Saturday when he blasted the gathering as "shameful" for failing to do more to fight hunger.

Jacques Diouf, head of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) that hosted the summit, also stressed Sunday the need to follow up on the "Rome declaration on world food security" and "world food summit plan of action" agreed here. (AFP)

Up to 4,000 Feared Dead During Refugee Crisis

GOMA, Zaire — Between 3,000 and 4,000 Rwandan refugees may have died in eastern Zaire's north Kivu region since the outbreak of the rebel crisis there late last month, UNHCR spokesman Ray Wilkinson said Sunday.

Ethnic Tutsi rebels took Goma in early November and expelled militias and former Hutu troops from Rwanda early last week from the Mugunga area west of Goma, triggering a mass return of refugees to their Rwandan homeland.

North Kivu had about 700,000 Hutu Rwandan refugees, most of whom decided to return home. Between 120,000 and 150,000 people, notably former army men and militias and their families, have fled northwest deeper into Zaire, according to figures released by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesman Mans Nyberg said earlier Sunday that six refugees, two of them babies, died Saturday in Rwanda on the road home.

He said the six died on the side of the road along which Rwandan refugees have been trudging for the past three days. It was not known why they had died.

Two women also gave birth, one to twins, on the side of the road. (AFP)

Romanians Vote for New President

BUCHAREST — Romanians on Sunday voted in the second round of presidential elections in which challenger Emil Constantinescu was tipped to end the seven-year rule of Ion Iliescu.

Iliescu, 66, who has governed Romania since the fall of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu in December 1989, obtained 32 percent of the vote in the first round of the elections against 28 percent for Constantinescu, a 57-year-old geologist.

But the challenger won the backing of other candidates, including former Prime Minister Petre Roman, who took 21 percent, and Gyorgy Frunda, representing the country's Hungarian minority, with six percent.

An opinion poll published since the first round on November 3 predicted a win for Constantinescu by 52.8 percent to 47.2 for Iliescu.

If Constantinescu wins he can expect full backing from a government coalition comprising his democratic convention and Roman's Social Democratic Union, which won general elections on November 3. (AFP)



TOULOUSE, France (Nov. 16): Two demonstrators wearing masks of French President Jacques Chirac (R) and Prime Minister Alain Jupp march during a demonstration in Toulouse against the government's economic and social policies.

(AFP PHOTO)

Cambodian PM Ranariddh Casts Doubt on Khmer Rouge Defectors' Allegations

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian first Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh Sunday dismissed allegations made by a group of defectors from an alleged urban Khmer Rouge terrorist cell.

The prince angrily denied an accusation made by the men Saturday at co-premier Hun Sen's home that his royalist Funcinpec Party conspired to delay their defections and denounced the manner in which the claims were made.

The defectors said two Funcinpec officials, claiming to represent the prince, had asked them not to defect because the time was not right.

"They are lying," the prince told reporters at his house, adding that he would not have allowed his residence to be used as a venue to launch such accusations, especially as they were unsupported by any evidence save a six-page statement from the men.

"I would have made further investigations and then I would have called Hun Sen before allowing any people to use my property," he said.

"I would have been much more cautious."

The prince said he could not comment on the main allegation made by the men — that prominent dissident Sam Rainsy and his officially unrecognized opposition Khmer Nation Party (KNP) were fronts for the hardline Khmer Rouge guerrilla movement. (AFP)

Thai Parties Poised to Form Alliance

BANGKOK — The New Aspiration Party (NAP), in a dead heat with rival Democrats in early election returns Sunday, appeared set to form an alliance with four other parties in the aim of setting up a government.

NAP leader Chaowalit Yongchaiyudh and the leaders of four other parties contesting the polls appeared before television cameras and spoke to reporters without making a formal announcement on the setting up of an alliance.

Chaowalit and the leaders of the Chart Thai Party, Prachakorn Thai Party, Social Action Party and Muanchuon talked about how they had got together for meetings as their parties had worked together in the previous government.

Such a government would be almost identical to the make-up of the coalition of outgoing chart Thai . Premier Banharn Silpa-Archa, whose administration collapsed under infighting and attacks by the public and media in September.

They later withdrew into the home of a key NAP official after Chaowalit said they would hold back on making any announcements until the results of the election were all in.

According to initial projections, an alliance of the five parties would be enough to prevent former Premier Chuan Leekpai and his Democrats from making up a majority with which to form a government if eventual victors (AFP)

Moldovans Go to Polls to Elect President

CHISINAU — Moldovans went to the polls Sunday to elect a new president for this former Soviet Republic now plagued by economic crisis in a vote boycotted by the breakaway Transdniestr region.

Polling stations opened at 8 a.m. (0600 GMT) AND will close at 8 p.m. (1800 GMT). First results will be available Monday.

Nine candidates are running in the election. Outgoing President Mircea Snegur, 56, a former communist apparatchik turned pro-Western liberal, is seeking a second term.

Snegur was the only candidate in the country's first presidential election in 1991. Since then, his country has undergone economic reform and democratization under his guidance. (AFP)

Police Arrest 4,000 Protestors at Miss World

BANGALORE, India — Baton-wielding police arrested some 4,000 leftists here Sunday after they tried to lay siege to a hotel housing 89 contestants of the Miss World pageant.

Witnesses said the predominantly female crowd, led by senior Communist Party of India-Marxist leader Suhasini Ali, was beaten back by truncheon-wielding policemen, and later packed off to police stations.

Ali said before her arrest that she had scored a victory over the state administration.

"The fact that the swimsuit round was moved to the Seychelles and other contests are being held outside Bangalore proves this," she said, as activists shouted : "Death to Miss World" and "Who Is More Beautiful. Mother Teresa or (India's last miss world winner) Aishwarya Rai?"

The action came hours after the police chief of this southern Indian city, capital of Karnataka state, said he was prepared to snuff out any protests.

"Nothing is being left to chance. We are anticipating all kinds of threats and are making arrangements to counter them," Sarat Chandra Burman, police commissioner of Bangalore, said.

We are also going to make preventive arrests," he said. "So far protest groups have been peaceful ... but we are worried some people might resort to self-immolations to dramatize the situation and grab publicity," he said. (AFP)

NEW DELHI, India (Nov. 16): A wailing woman holds her child outside the ruins of her home in a New Delhi shantytown razed by a devastating fire. Some 300 shacks were destroyed in the blaze.

(AFP PHOTO)

Russian Mars Mission Ends in Failure

MOSCOW — Russia's celebrated mission to Mars failed early Sunday shortly after the rocket blasted off into space, the military space forces said.

The failure is a serious setback for the struggling Russian space program, which was counting on the Mars 96 probe to give it a new lease on life.

Space force officials refused immediate explanation of what went wrong after the four-stage proton booster lifted off at 11:48 p.m. Moscow time (20:48 GMT) Saturday from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakstan, the Interfax news agency said.

At the space tracking center in Evpatoriya in Ukraine, officials said the first three stages fired properly and the problems arose during the fourth stage, Interfax reported.

Space control lost contact with the spacecraft, which was in orbit around the earth, Interfax said. The probe could remain in orbit no longer than 30 days and will likely burn up re-entering the earth's atmosphere, it said, quoting space official Vladimir Molodtsov.

Officials were analyzing "telemetric data," or signals, to figure out what went wrong, he said. (AP)

Europe Losing Out to USA, Japan, in High-Tech Fight

Mororola's StarTAC — as the world's smallest and lightest 'pocket' cellular phone.

HELSINKI, Finland — Europe is losing the high-tech battle against the United States and Japan, and the European Union should do more to protect its interests, Nokia's Chief Executive Officer says.

"Europe has lost many large policy battles in technology and industry," Jorma Ollila was quoted as saying in an interview in Friday's Helsingin *Sanomat* newspaper. "Consumer electronics, computers and semi-conductors have already been lost to Japan and the United States."

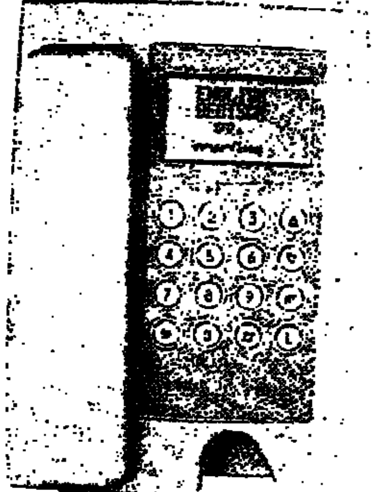
Ollila, who heads Europe's top maker of mobile phones, urged the EU to be more active in fighting the battle over telecommunications.

"The EU must, for its own part, guarantee that Europe doesn't lose this battle. The company is putting considerable effort into it," Ollila said.

On Thursday, Nokia announced that its profit rose 20 percent in the third quarter, helped by a rebound in its mobile telephone business.

Nokia's stock rose more than 10 percent on the profit news, which included a positive outlook for the rest of the year.

The gain represented a comeback for Nokia's stock to its highest levels in a year. Nokia stock fell sharply in December when it announced losses in its television business, which it has since sold.



Temporary Pay Phone used for emergencies or exhibitions or other temporary installations by Nokia Telecommunications.

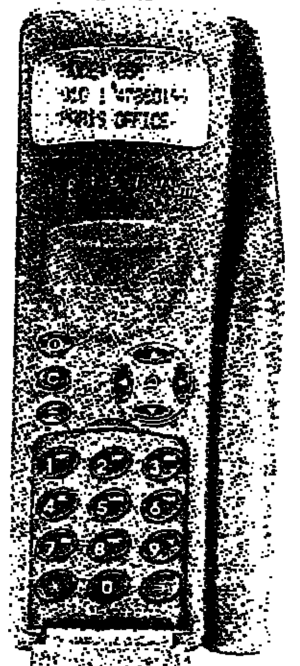
Ollila said his company would be able to compete internationally on its own, without the need for mergers. "There is no great, dramatic need for cooperation," he said.

Nokia plans to invest heavily in providing equipment for Internet services, he said.

"The Internet will offer the possibility for all kinds of new services, via both mobile phone and fixed-line networks. They (these services) have a great influence on how phone networks are built," Ollila said.

During the first nine months of this year Nokia spent 2.4 billion markkaa ($545 million) on research and development, a 34-percent increase on the same period in 1995.

Nokia is the world's no. 2 mobile phone maker after the U.S.-based Motorola, employing 31,800 people worldwide - an increase of 500 from last year. (AP)



Motorola's IRIDIUM low-orbit satellite-communications system will to be produced commercially in 1998.

Double-Digit Loan Expansion to Power Singapore Banks' Growth

SINGAPORE — Double-digit loan expansion and a recovery in non-interest income will power the growth of listed Singapore banks despite a slowing economy, a leading investment house said in a report received Sunday.

Loan growth in 1996 is expected to hit 17 percent and stay in double digits until 1998 on the back of property loan drawdowns and robust construction demand from contracts already awarded, Nomura Research Institute (NRI) said.

"We continue to be overweight on Singapore banks," NRI said in a report on Singapore banking, predicting that earnings of five local listed banks would rise by healthy rates despite the economy decelerating.

It forecast that the net profit of Development Bank of Singapore Ltd. will rise 14.1 percent year-on-year to 678.3 million Singapore dollars (484.5 million US) in the year to December 31.

Keppel Bank Ltd. would see net profit during the year rise 26.3 percent to 94.8 million dollars, Overseas-Chinese Banking Corp. Ltd. 18.7 percent to 718.1 million dollars, Overseas Union Bank Ltd. 22 percent to 316.3 million dollars and United Overseas Bank Ltd. 15.8 percent to 732.7 million dollars, NRI said.

The report followed investor concerns about the impact on bank earnings of a slowdown in the property market caused by government curbs on real-estate speculation and a slowdown in the electronics sector.

New residential projects launched following the curbs in mid-May have been poorly received.

Nomura said the slowdown would have minimal impact on loan growth up to 1998 since banks would continue to see progressive drawdowns of property loans taken earlier, adding that demand would pick up once the market has consolidated.

Construction activity is expected to remain brisk over the next seven years on the back of 17 billion dollars worth of contracts expected to be awarded this year, it said.

And a new source of loan demand will be provided by the government's program to build 'executive condominiums' to cater to those at the high end of the public housing.

The Japanese Investment House estimated that the electronics sector accounted for only about five-to-six percent of total outstanding loans, adding that the electronics downturn would have limited impact on loan growth.

It also foresaw a recovery in non-interest income, which fell by 0.4 percent and 4.0 percent in 1994 and 1995 respectively as a result of lower stockbroking contributions. Such income accounts for about 30 percent of Singapore Banks' total revenue.

NRI said non-interest income would rise by an average 14.5 percent in 1996 and 12.6 percent in 1997, supported by other fee-based activities such as foreign exchange trading and fund management.

Singapore is the fourth most important foreign exchange center after London, New York and Tokyo, with an average daily trading volume of 111 billion US dollars last year.

"The increasing importance of the republic as a major foreign exchange trading center will help boost customer-related foreign exchange fees for the local banks," NRI said.

Stockbroking earnings will have 'limited downside' given the low base of 1995, while growing overseas operations will bolster overall profit growth, it added. (AFP)

EU to Probe BT-MCI Merger

BRUSSELS, Belgium — The European Union said Friday it will investigate whether the megamerger of British Telecommunications and MCI communications of the United States violates EU antitrust rules.

EU Competition Commissioner Karel Van Miert said the EU routinely investigates corporate mergers if either company has European sales exceeding 250 million European currency units ($318 million).



Advanced videophone called Portrait 9000, known as Presence in England produced by British Telecom.

"It's now pretty clear that we have to take the case," Van Miert told reporters.

In Britain's largest-ever corporate takeover, announced this month, British Telecom will pay 2.3 billion pounds (dlrs 1.4 billion) in cash for MCI

Van Miert said there have already been contacts between the European Commission, the EU executive branch, and the two companies.

Pending regulatory approval on both sides of the Atlantic, BT will take over MCI in August, 1997, creating a global telecoms giant, to be called Concert PLC.

Van Miert has hinted in the past an investigation of the BT-MCI merger would be "easier" than the recently-launched investigation of global one, which groups Deutsche Telekom, France Telecom and Sprint Corp. of the United States. The reason is that the home markets of both BT and MCI are already largely liberalized whereas the German and French telephone markets are still de facto monopolies.

British Telecommunications PLC, a privatized former state-run network, has a 60 percent stake in Cellnet, a British Cellphone Network Operator.

Under EU rules, the European Commission can order changes in - or even block - planned corporate mergers or linkups if it judges these are bound to violate EU fair trade rules. (AP)

Factory Output Falls With Auto Strikes

WASHINGTON — Industrial production declined 0.5 percent in October, the first drop in seven months, as autoworker strikes halted output at General Motors plants.

The Federal Reserve said output at the nation's factories, mines and utilities was down from the revised 0.3 percent advance in September. It was the first drop since an identical 0.5 percent decrease last March.

Many analysts had expected production to be unchanged.

On Wall Street, the Dow Jones industrials climbed further in early trading Friday, following seven straight sessions of setting records. But bonds dipped with the yield on 30-year treasury bonds inching up to 6.43 percent from the eight-month low of 6.41 percent reached late Thursday.

The Fed said sharp drops in auto production accounted for the decrease.

"Motor vehicle assemblies dropped more than 7 percent from their September level," the report explained. "This falloff resulted largely from shortages of parts made at strike-affected plants in Canada and from a strike that had shut down some domestic assembly plants late in the month."

But the Fed said that even excluding the motor vehicle component, production was off 0.2 percent.

Analysts attributed some of the decline to attempts by businesses to trim some of the inventories that accumulated during the summer as consumer demand shrank.

The government previously estimated that inventory growth accounted for nearly all of the 2.2 percent gain in the third-quarter gross domestic product, the total output of goods and services within the United States.

Industrial production in October was 3.6 percent higher than a year earlier.

The report was fresh evidence of a moderating economy with no sign of inflation that permitted the Fed to hold interest rates steady at its policymaking meeting on Wednesday.

There was little indication of price pressures in Friday's report. The Fed said the nation's industries were operating at 82.7 percent of capacity, down from 83.4 percent in September.

That is less than the 85 percent capacity utilization that analysts say threatens productions bottlenecks that could lead to shortages and higher prices.

Manufacturing output fell 0.5 percent, erasing a 0.3 percent advance in September. Production of durable goods - items such as cars and computers expected to last more than three years - was down 0.7 percent. Output of nondurable goods such as chemicals and clothing slipped 0.2 percent.

Output at the nation's utilities was unchanged after gaining 0.3 percent in September. But mining production fell 1 percent after slipping 0.1 percent the previous month. (AP)

China to Provide Major Boost to Real Estate Sector

BEIJING — China's State Council will provide a major boost for the country's embattled real estate sector by extending credit to developers and mortgages to purchasers by the end of the year, according to Sunday's official media.

The real estate market — which was thrown into chaos by China's tight credit squeeze in mid-1993 — is set to become a pillar of the growing economy, said Pan Qiyuan, secretary general of the China Real Estate Association.

He told the *China Daily* that, before the end of the year, the State Council would issue decrees calling for reduced levies on commercially-built housing, increased credit lines for property developers and easier access to mortgage loans for consumers.

A fourth decree dealing with unsold commercial housing is also in the pipeline, proposing the sale of such units at near-cost prices, Pan added.

The move to promote real estate construction and label it a pillar of the economy comes as the

(Contd on Pg.15)

Foreign Sponsors of Housing Project in Row with New Pakistan Government

ISLAMABAD — Foreign sponsors of a multi-million-dollar housing scheme in Islamabad Sunday threatened legal action after Pakistan's caretaker government branded the project as 'dubious'.

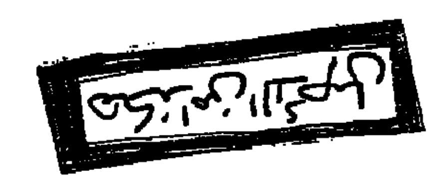
The Islamabad New City (INC) project was launched by a international consortium of investors during the administration of sacked Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

The sponsors include Asia Challenge Investments PTE Ltd. of Singapore, Cotrasa SA of Switzerland, MG Realtors (PVT) Ltd. and MG Hertz (PVT) of Pakistan.

INC legal advisors and the foreign constortium members have 'specially flown in to consider appropriate legal action,' INC's attorney, Popham Haik, said in a public notice carried by local newspapers.

The row erupted after the interim government's Information Minister Irshad Ahmad Haqqani on Thursday said the INC was a 'dubious scheme'.

Haqqani said he had asked his ministry to 'stop showing' a promotional advertisement on the project on state-run television. (AFP)



India's Major Airports Ill-Equipped to Handle Traffic

NEW DELHI – Four major Indian airports handle almost all its international air traffic but are poorly equipped for the task, an expert was quoted as saying Saturday.

The world's worst midair collision near New Delhi, in which 349 people died when a Saudi Boeing-747 and a Kazakh Ilyushin-76 slammed into each other, is a deadly pointer to the future, the expert told the *Indian Express* daily.

The official from the state-run Airports Authority of India (AAI) said the airports at New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras – covering the north, west, east and south of the country, handled 95% of international traffic.

Figures released by the Tourism Ministry recently claimed overseas arrivals in India had shot up five-fold to 11 million this year from 1973, spurred by promotional campaigns touting India as a mixture of culture, history, the exotic and adventure sports.

Domestic passengers have also increased four-fold in the same period to 15 million, it said.

The AAI official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said international traffic was expected to grow by seven percent every year until 2000, pegging the annual domestic growth rate at 12 percent.

He said the Civil Aviation Department was now trying to take the pressure off the four overloaded airports by upgrading smaller ones. The AAI controls 120 airports across the country.

"The idea is to selectively lengthen runways, expand terminal buildings and install modern navigation aids so that even the bigger aircraft can run," he said.

Official apathy and a resource crunch have stalled the modernization of airports in India including an ambitious $114-million project to upgrade air traffic services at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport.

U.S. firm Raytheon, which won the order, has brought in about 60% of the software and hardware but installation has been stalled because the federal public investment board is yet to approve a revised costing for the project, pushed up by delays.

An air safety panel, headed by former Air Force Air Marshal J.K. Seth and formed a month ago, meanwhile, suggested separate air corridors for ascending and descending aircraft and called for the setting up of a national board to investigate air accidents.

Seth said separate corridors would lead to easier handling of air traffic during peak hours but warned the system was not totally foolproof.

Aviation experts have said carrion and uncollected garbage near Indian airports also compromised safety, with vultures and other birds hovering near them and frequently colliding with aircraft.

Authorities at Bombay airport, which alone handles about 40 percent of India's international traffic and offers connections to several Indian cities, recently ordered the closure of several illegal abattoirs in its vicinity.

"We have been lucky that there have been no aircraft crashing due to bird hits of late," an official said.

New Delhi's airport has an old radar system, which cannot distinguish altitudes.

The monopulse secondary surveillance radar (SSR) – which gives the air traffic control information both about altitude and speed – has only been installed in airports in the southern cities of Hyderabad and Trivandrum.

Meanwhile, an aviation expert on Saturday said India should invest in state-of-art technology to clean up its poor safety record.

"While the short-range SSR would provide luminous display for every four-five seconds about the exact location and altitude of aircraft covering nearly 100 nautical miles, the long-range radar would give 200 nautical miles coverage and provide similar luminous display every 10 to 12 seconds," Balraj Sokkapa said.

Tuesday's disaster is India's 25th major air crash since a Fokker Friendship Passenger Plane crashed in Kashmir on February 7, 1966 killing 37 people.

(AFP)

India's Industrial Pollution a Horror Story

NEW DELHI -- Environment organization Greenpeace recently warned that India could turn into a toxic wasteland if steps were not taken to regulate the dumping of industrial waste.

"We found a horror story in our investigation into the possible impact of the discharge of toxic wastes by the growing industry in the Indian environment," said Greenpeace researcher Bob Edwards.

Edwards and David Santillo, a scientist linked to the organization, said they conducted their investigation in the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Delhi and Tamil Nadu and tested 100 samples of pollutants picked up from industrial units.

"We are not opposed to development. We recognize the need to build an adequate infrastructure and technology base in India, but we want to bring an awareness of the damage to the environment that is happening here," Santillo said.

The Greenpeace activists said they would present their findings on the "hazard millions of Indians were facing," to four state authorities.

The team said the unchecked dumping of industrial waste exposed tens of thousands to diseases such as lung, liver, kidney and breast cancer.

Santillo and Edwards cited several examples of unchecked dumping of waste into the environment by private and state-run firms and said the toxicity of some of the effluents was "beyond imagination."

"We found mercury and DDT pesticides to be 300 times more than legal limits at a shrimp farm in New Delhi," Santillo said.

In the western state of Gujarat they said they found toxic nitrogen compounds 120 times over legal limits in the effluent of a dye factory.

"Most effluent treatment plants in factories do not work to limit the entry of poison in the environment. They are just there to instill a false sense of security," Edwards added.

"It is a shocking story that not one state pollution control board has taken notice of what is happening," he said, adding that chlorine and dioxine were silently killing people coming in contact with the two deadly chemicals.

They warned the boom in the plastic and paper pulp industries would spur the demand for chorine gas.

"Reliance Industries alone plans to manufacture 400,000 tons of the gas in its bid to turn into a global player," Edwards said of the petrochemical giant, and warned chlorine also produced carcinogenic agents.

(AFP)

Kitchen and Car Scenes of Strife in Italy

ROME – *Italian couples are more* likely to quarrel with each other in the kitchen or in the car, and at weekends, according to a poll published in the latest edition of the medical journal *Riza Psicomatica*.

The poll of 300 people aged between 25 and 45 indicated that 40 percent of rows broke out in the kitchen, 25 percent in the car, 15 percent in bed, 12 percent when eating out, and eight percent in the living room.

Sixty-three percent of couples fought at the weekend, and particularly after 7 p.m.

But one couple in four claimed never to quarrel, nearly half fell out every two to three months, 20 percent every 10 to 15 days and eight percent virtually every day.

But while arguments were fairly rare they were often fierce, ending in a shouting match in 37 percent of cases.

While 70 percent of the couples interviewed though that disputes should be avoided, the Riza Institute which carried out the poll commented that an open and sincere quarrel was better than surface harmony with bitterness beneath.

(AFP)

Judge Rejects BAT Bid for New Trial

JACKSONVILLE, Florida – A judge Friday denied a request to overturn a jury verdict against a U.S. subsidiary of Britain's BAT Industries that awarded $750,000 in damages to two smokers who contracted lung cancer, according to lawyers for the victims.

The U.S. firm, Brown and Williamson had called for a new trial, claiming there were procedural errors in the handling of the case.

Duval County Fourth Circuit Court Judge Brian Davis rejected the claim and another that Brown and Williamson did not get a fair trial.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs notably had used for the first time internal documents showing Brown and Williamsony had long understood nicotine was addictive and had concealed it from the public.

The original ruling was only the second in which a tobacco manufacturer had to pay damages.

The jury had awarded Grady and Mildred Carter $750,000 in damages. The plaintiffs had claimed they contracted lung cancer after smoking Lucky Strike cigarettes.

(AFP)

AL-JAFAR, Jordan (November 12): A group of camel passes in front of a lorry loaded with British made supersonic car Thrust SSC in the Jordanian desert Al-Jafar, moments before its first test by British Andy Green. The driver performed a 210 km/h run.

(AFP PHOTO)

Two-Bill Society -- Pay for Electricity, Then Pay Again

"I have a telephone at home but since it rained, it's not working. The only reason I have a cellular phone is because I cannot rely on my home phone."

BEIRUT, Lebanon – Paying the monthly bills is painful anywhere. In Beirut, it's twice as bad.

As Lebanon recovers from decades of war and disruption, the government is again charging regularly for water, electricity and phones -- even if it can't always provide them. Entrepreneurs are stepping in to fill the gap, and residents yearning for normal life are footing the bill.

"I have a telephone at home but since it rained, it's not working," said resident Helen Jabra. "The only reason I have a cellular phone is because I cannot rely on my home phone."

Since two companies set up cellular phone networks last year, 185,000 customers have signed up, most in Beirut where a third of Lebanon's 3 million people live. It costs $500 to get hooked up, plus $500 to $900 for the phone, and then come the monthly bills.

Many people also depend on private generators when city electricity fails. The average cost per household is about $100 monthly for both services.

Mrs. Jabra's home, which she shares with her businessman husband and two daughters, is also connected to a private water source for $50 a month. That's in addition to the average 10,000 pounds ($7) a month for city water.

"It's nice to have constant running water. I have never complained about how much I have to pay for it," said Mrs. Jabra.

Since electricity, water, and trash collection services are billed like a tax, residents have no choice but to pay the government for them, even if they don't work. As for phones, many residents keep paying government bills just to keep the lines, which often take years to install.

The luxury of private services isn't available to all. The minimum wage in Lebanon is 300,000 pounds ($200) monthly. The average monthly salary is probably $300 to $400, though more exact figures are unavailable.

Still, the private companies attract customers sick of haphazard municipal services and no services at all during the 1975-90 civil war.

Then, water was regularly cut, electricity was rationed to six hours daily and garbage piled up in street bins until angry residents set it afire to get rid of the stench.

Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's reconstruction plan, launched in 1992, has earmarked $2 billion to improve public services. Under the plan, roads and sidewalks are being rebuilt, traffic lights installed, pipes laid and cables connected.

Since electricity, water, and trash collection services are billed like a tax, residents have no choice but to pay the government for them, even if they don't work. As for phones, many residents keep paying government bills just to keep the lines, which often take years to install.

By December 31, some 600,000 new telephone lines are scheduled to be available throughout Lebanon, and the Telecommunications Ministry promises more than a million lines by the end of 1997.

Until then, companies like the United Business Co., will have a booming market.

The company, which picks up garbage at people's houses instead of the street bins used by the city's collectors, has signed up 5,000 clients in six months. The monthly fee is 20,000 pounds ($13), in addition to $7 per month each household must pay the city. The company is expanding to suburban towns.

"We're collecting garbage from homes because the municipalities don't," said company accountant Pierre al-Mir. "We're doing a service that is lacking and people are happy."

(AP)

Estonia Car-Ferry Vandalized on Baltic Seabed

HELSINKI -- The Estonia car-ferry that sank in the Baltic Sea in September 1994, killing 852 people, has been vandalized by divers, according to recent Swedish press reports.

A hole has been discovered in the hull of the ship, which is lying at a depth of 80 meters (250 feet) on the floor of the Baltic Sea, according to Gustav Hanoliak, a diving expert with the Swedish Administration of Shipping and Navigation.

Hanoliak, quoted by Radio Stockholm, added that bars that had been welded over a previous hole made by vandals have been removed.

Hanoliak rejected any possibility that the damage was due to natural causes.

Sweden, Finland and Estonia have signed a legal agreement protecting the wreck, which has been declared a sea grave. The agreement bans Swedes, Finns and Estonians from entering the waters around the Estonia.

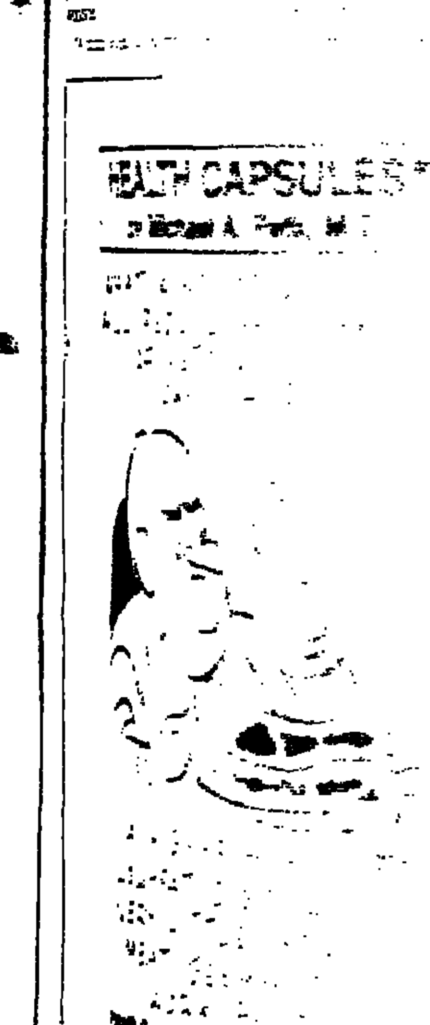
As the ship is located in international waters, the wreck cannot be protected from citizens of other states.

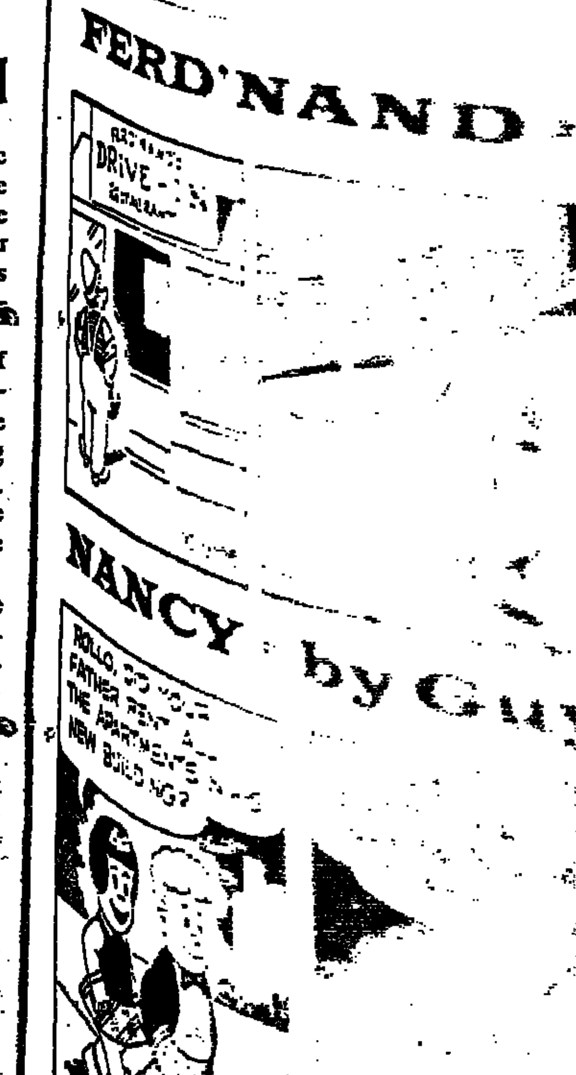
The bodies of the victims have never been refloated, despite the fact that a large majority of the families of the victims are in favor of such a move. Only 93 bodies were recovered after the catastrophe..

The ferry sank on the night of September 27-28 about 100 kilometers (60 miles) southeast of the Finnish coast while on a crossing between Tallinn and Stockholm. The accident marked one of the worst maritime disasters since World War II.

An official report on the cause of the catastrophe has been repeatedly delayed and is now expected to be published in early 1997.

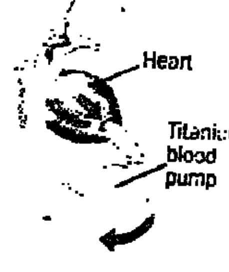
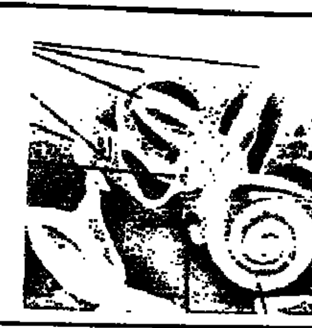
(AFP)





TEHRAN TIMES



U.S. Sees Priority in AIDS Vaccine Research

NEW YORK — The Clinton Administration is committed to progress in combatting the AIDS epidemic and has made research to develop an AIDS vaccine a priority, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala said on recently.

Shalala told reporters at the dedication of new AIDS research laboratories in New York — the city with the highest number of HIV/AIDS cases in the United States — that the government wants to reflect the work of scientists worldwide.

"A vaccine research ought to be at the top of our priority list and we expect over the next month or so to have some things to say in that area," she said.

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), often transmitted through sexual contact or the use of unsterilized needles in drug injection, can lead to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), which is incurable and nearly always fatal.

Shalala gave no other details and declined to discuss her future in the administration, in transition after President Bill Clinton's re-election to a second term on Nov. 5. "I have no announcement as to my own plans, as to my own desires until I've had an opportunity to talk to the president," she told a news conference at the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center, the largest independent AIDS research laboratory in the world.

"The president's commitment is firm both in this country's domestic commitments and its financial commitments, as well as its international commitments on AIDS and we expect to move forward, more collaboratively than we started out," she said.

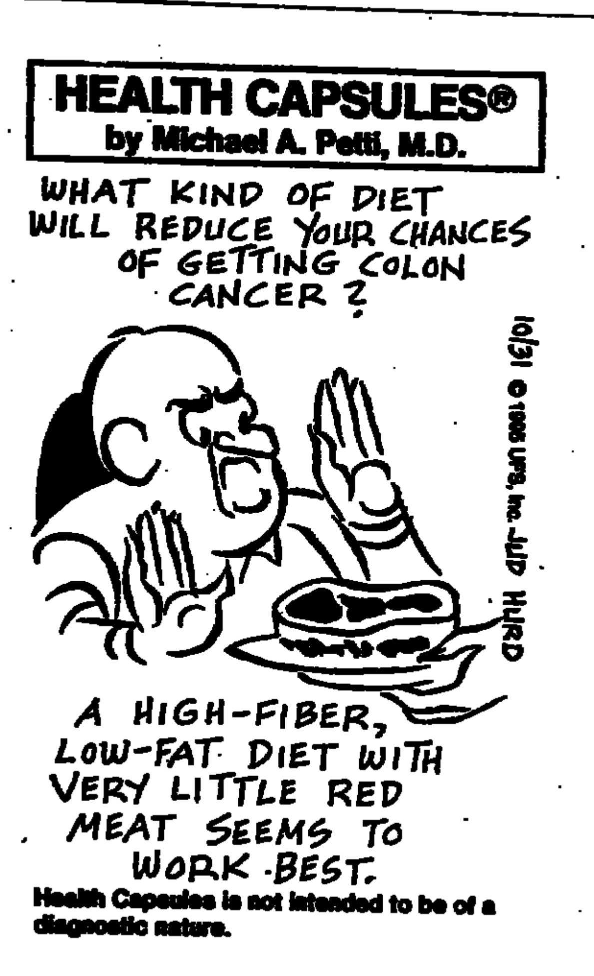
Last week in Birmingham, England, researchers at the third international congress on drug therapy in HIV infection said they were encouraged by the performance of a new class of drugs known as non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs).

It was the first documented evidence that a new "cocktail" of drugs can eliminate all detectable levels of the AIDS virus from bodily tissues where it is known to hide. The drugs worked as well as the highly touted protease inhibitors, doctors at the birmingham conference said.

Aaron Diamond Centre director David Ho said that "now, instead of having a few relatively weak drugs against HIV, we have 10 retroviral agents. Over the last couple of years we have learned how to combine some of them into potent combinations and those are now achieving a dramatic effect on controlling the replication of the virus and that is beginning to yield real differences for patients."

He said the five new laboratories would allow the centre to do more work in molecular retrovirology, immunology and the viral dynamics of HIV as well as increase the team of scientists, researchers and staff to 120 from 70.

(Reuter)





Abortion Third-Leading Cause of Death Among Pregnant Brazilians

RIO DE JANEIRO — Abortion is the third-leading cause of death among pregnant women in Brazil, according to a study by the Brazilian health ministry released recently.

Illegal abortions accounted for 8.2 percent of all pregnant women's deaths, according to the study. High blood pressure was responsible for 26 percent of the deaths, and hemorrhages for 13 percent.

This year, one out of four Brazilian women who became pregnant either miscarried, had a legal abortion, or had an illegal abortion, said Jose Formiga, an official in the ministry's Mother-Child Health Division.

In 1995, 1.09 million Brazilian women aborted.

The report also says that this year, public hospitals treated 271,000 women for complications from botched abortions.

Brazil allows abortion only in cases of rape and in cases where the woman's health is at risk. (AFP)

THOUGHT

Piety and abstinence are the roots of religion.

(Hazrat Ali (AS))

PRAYER

Noon 11:50
Evening 17:17
Dawn (tomorrow) 05:09
Sunrise (tomorrow) 06:45

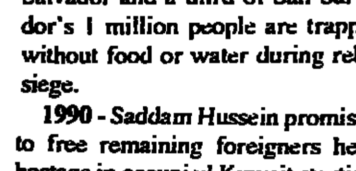
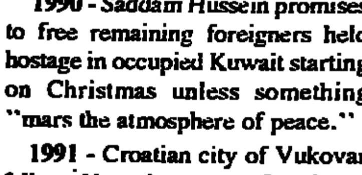
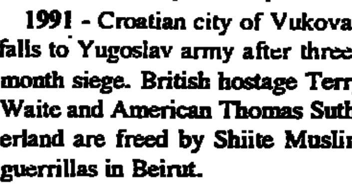
TODAY IN HISTORY

1941 - British troops launch attack in West African desert in World War II.

1978 - Jonestown massacre occurs in Guyana, with U.S. congressman and four other people killed as they try to leave people's temple camp - and almost 900 cult members committing suicide.

1987 - Lawyers group reports systematic violations of Geneva Convention bans on genocide, torture and use of chemical weapons by Soviet and allied troops in Afghanistan.

1989 - At least 800 people are dead after a week of fighting in El Salvador and a third of San Salvador's 1 million people are trapped without food or water during rebel siege.

1990 - Saddam Hussein promises to free remaining foreigners held hostage in occupied Kuwait starting on Christmas unless something "mars the atmosphere of peace."

1991 - Croatian city of Vukovar falls to Yugoslav army after three-month siege. British hostage Terry Waite and American Thomas Sutherland are freed by Shiite Muslim guerrillas in Beirut.

1992 - Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is flown home to Karachi after being arrested in Islamabad, and may be placed under house arrest.

1993 - Nigeria's new military ruler, Gen. Sani Abacha dissolves all democratic institutions.

1994 - Scientists in Berlin claim to have found a new element, a fusion of nickel and lead atoms that existed for less than a thousandth of a second.

1995 - Hong Kong businesswoman Alexandra Manley becomes Princess of Denmark in a glittering wedding to Prince Joachim, second in line to the throne.

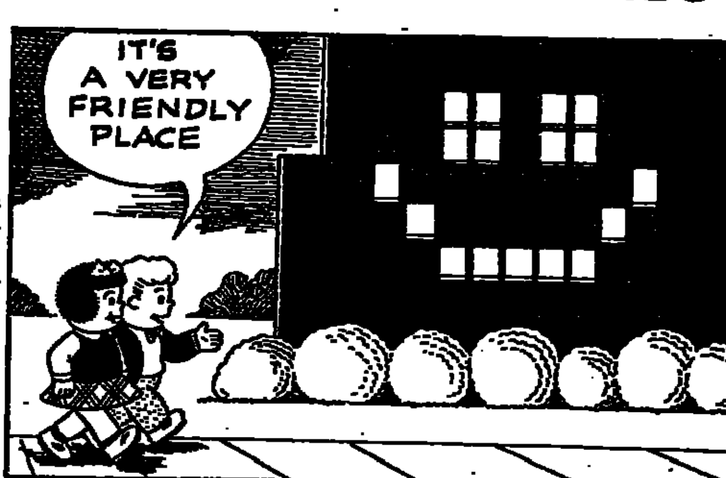
FERD'NAND ® by Henrik Rehr



NANCY ® by Guy & Brad Gilchrist







Social Security and Health in Iran

PART 2

An allowance must be payable to parents or guardians of a child whose physical, intellectual or psychiatric disability requires a high level of daily care and attention in the family home.

A mobility allowance should be paid to the disabled people who are employed or engaged in training and are unable to use public transportation because of their disabilities. A carer's pension must be available to people providing long-term care at home to a severly disabled pension or beneficiary.

Unemployed People

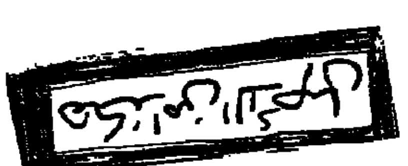
Programs for the unemployed aim to ensure that unemployed people who are seeking employment or improving their opportunities - by, for example, undertaking vocational training courses, rehabilitations, or in some circumstances, education - must receive adequate levels of income for themselves and their dependants through what we can call "job search allowance", and have their entry or re-entry into active employment encouraged and assisted.

The jobs, education and training programs will greatly improve employmnet and training opportunities for sole parents, who are mainly women.

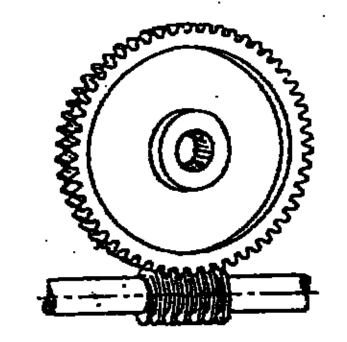
Families With Children

The government should aim to ensure that families with children including sole parent families receive fair levels of assistance towards the costs of raising their children.

The program will aim to maintain the value of payments for children relative to other social security payments, provide adequate levels of income for sole parents; improve financial support for children of separated or divorced parents through increased assistance from the non-custodial parent and provide, in conjunction with the activities of other agencies, opportunities and incentives for self-help and reducing dependence on social security payments.



40-Tap Soft Drink Filler Manufactured for the First Time in the Country

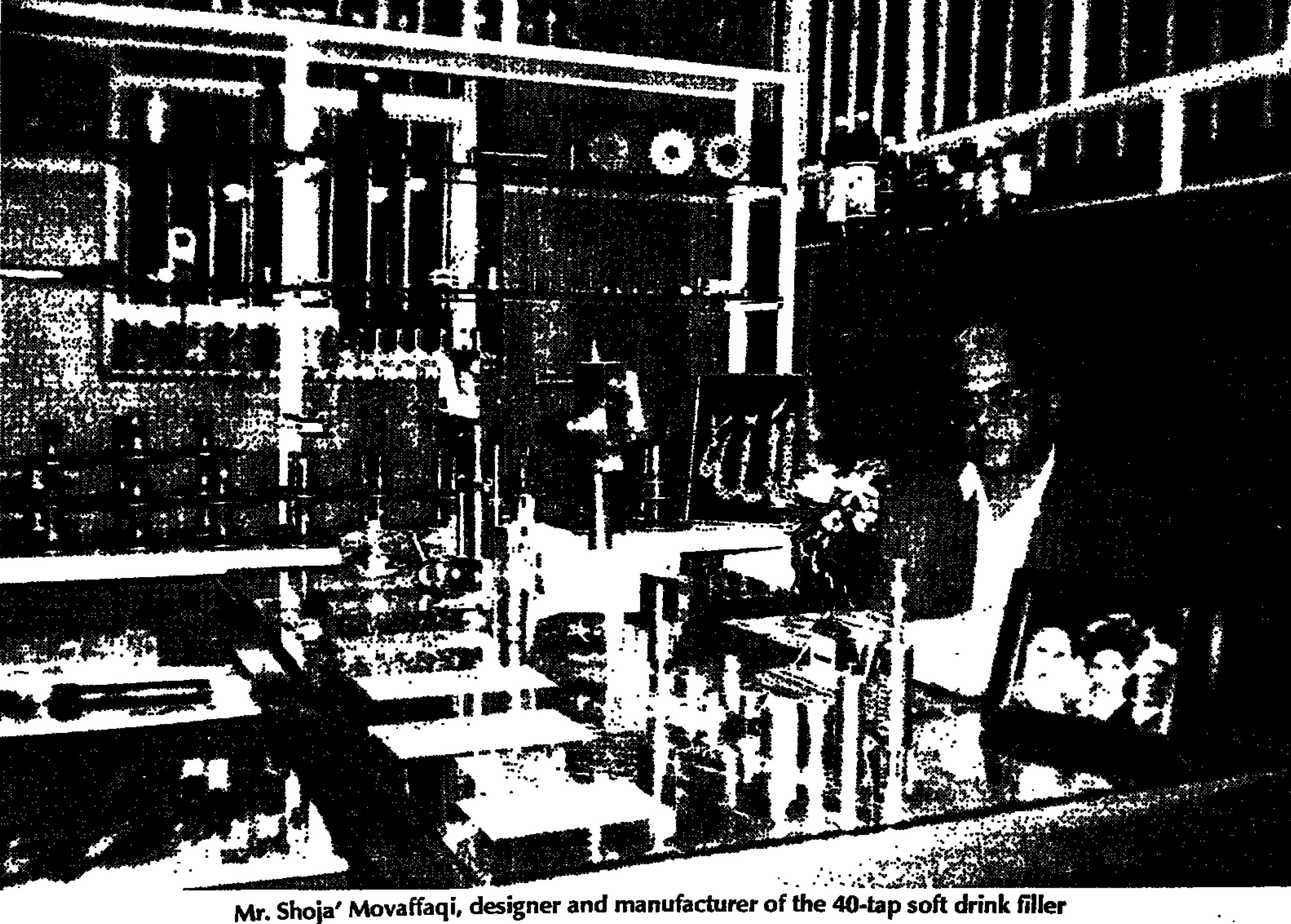


For the first time in the country the 40-tap soft drink filler was designed and manufactured by Shoja' Movaffaqi, managing director of Daqiq-Tarash Imen Company.

The company has been first a lathing workshop which was developed, later in 1981, into a small but efficient company. The company has started manufacturing different parts of various machinery, specially carbonated soft drink fillers, since 1973. With 25 years experience and enjoying friendly collaboration of 32 employees the company manufactures all parts of the production line of carbonated soft drinks.

Regarding the fact that Qom Province has had a very high population growth, and because it has many holy shrines as the holy shrine of Hazrat Ma'soumeh (SA), it hosts many visitors from around the country. Therefore, the demand for carbonated soft drinks is always in the rise in this city. This calls for an independent center to shoulder the responsibility of procuring and distributing soft drinks. That is why the first soft drink filler was sent to the holy city of Qom.

Shoja' Movaffaqi is a self-confident and self-made expert who has started his career from the scratch. Born in one of the villages of Borojerd, he showed his interest and talent to lathing from the very early years of childhood. His handicrafts with a knife and a piece of wood were his first understanding of lathing. Some years passed and he set up a lathing workshop. That gave him a great opportunity to materialize his plans long existing in his mind. He made spare parts for soft drink fillers and later developed his work into creating a 40-tap soft drink filler which is being used in Qom now.



Mr. Shoja' Movaffaqi, designer and manufacturer of the 40-tap soft drink filler

Shoja' Movaffaqi came in person to the daily Tehran Times to take part in an interview and answer questions on his filler machine.

He said: Manufacturing the carbonated soft drink filler in Iran costs some Rls. 400,000,000, whereas importing the filler machine from foreign countries costs U.S.$300,000. So, it is crystal clear that locally manufacturing the filler saves up considerable hard currency for the country.

The technology of manufacturing this kind of filler has always been focus of attention for foreigners. We have done nothing, so far, to export the technical know-how in the field. We had so many foreign visitors from Dubai, Georgia, Armenia, etc. who voiced their readiness to purchase the technology and also the filler itself.

On the purpose behind manufacturing the 40-tap filler Movaffaqi said he had long experience in lathing and producing spare parts for the filler machinery. He said his parts were better than similar foreign ones, as many soft drink companies have asserted. Two out of many appreciation letters, reflected on these two pages, certify the claim.

But the most important solid evidence, he said, is the filler itself and its parts working soundly.

Manufacturing the filler was a very giant project for a man who wanted to materialize it by financial support of some Basijis from Qom, but relying on his own work experience and technical knowledge.

The talented expert had witnessed a foreign filler somewhere, and the idea of producing a similar machine sparked in his mind at that first glance. "Once I look at a machine, I design its working process in my mind," he said.

In spite of many obstacles in his way, Movaffaqi manufactured and put into operation the first 40-tap soft drink filler in Iran, for which many customers are standing in queue.

Asked on the cooperation and financial support of the public and state, he said he was inclined to accept support mostly from poor families to develop the filler machine "because the filler could return their money and secure a ceaseless income for their families."

According to Shoja' Movaffaqi, the next and most important objective behind manufacturing the filler is another step toward attaining self-sufficiency in the field in the country.

The project could be put on stream by further support from Ministry of Industries and Budget and Plan Organization.

He said by putting into operation the manufacturing line of soft drink fillers, so many employment opportunities will be created.

The managing director of Daqiq-Tarash Imen company went on to say he could also train experts in the field to work in different vocational centers in different corners of country.

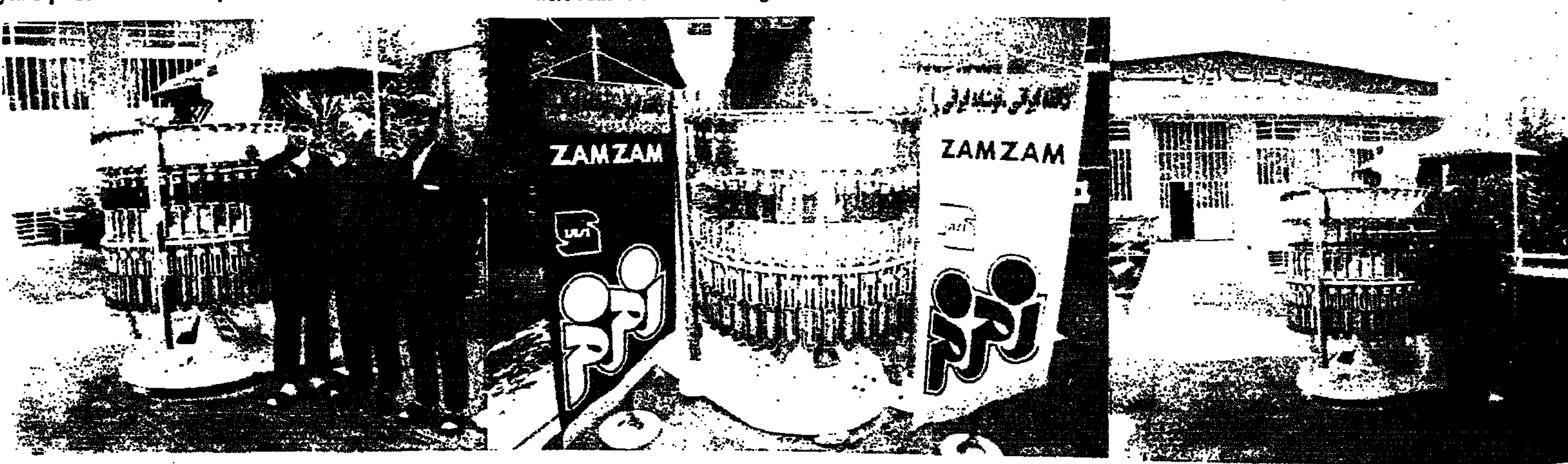
It was in 1994 that the company wanted to import carbonated soft drink filler machinery. "It was unbelievable. 800,000 dollars was required for the import of a single soft drink filler."

That was why he decided to manufacture the machinery in the country. It was hard but possible. There was no support from the responsible authorities at the very beginning.

In spite of the obstacles in the way, some Basijis from the holy city of Qom gathered together to support the expert. The cooperation was fruitful and the 40-tap soft drink filler was manufactured at last. It saves up 300,000 dollars of hard currency for the country.

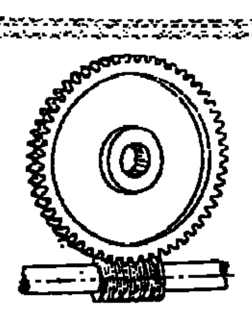
Elsewhere, the managing director of Daqiq-Tarash Imen said his company can manufacture one unit of soft drink filler machinery per two months, if sufficient support be granted by responsible ministries and authorities.

(Contd on Pg. 9)





Daqiq-Tarash Imen Company Takes Giant Strides Toward Attaining Self-Sufficiency



The first filler was granted to Qom Soft Drink Company by the manufacturer with forty percent discount.

The manufacturer of the filler said he was proud to take a step toward attaining self-sufficiency in the country and the development of industries in Iran.

Asked on the other machinery parts manufactured in his company, Movaffaqi said: In Daqiq-Tarash Imen Company many parts of different machinery are produced; as spare parts for plastic injection, Ortmann tap, punches for bottle-capping machines, bottle-capping pressing machines, machinery for yarn production line, box fillers, box dischargers, and bottle washers, etc.

He said his company is ready to produce required machinery parts with the best quality — even better than similar foreign ones — with lower prices.

The managing director of Daqiq-Tarash Imen stated he has received many appreciation letters from some soft drink companies, for which he has produced machinery parts.

The new soft drink filler enjoys priorities over the American Mayer soft drink filler in quality.

Daqiq-Tarash Imen possesses the capability of producing a unit of 40-tap soft drink filler every two months.

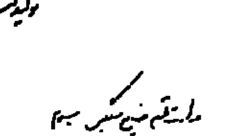
Some of the companies may be cited as Tehran Zam Zam, Rasht Niknoush, Isfahan Khoshta'm, Isfahan Coffee Cola, Ahvaz Niknoush, and Iran Zam Zam.

When asked 'What motivated you to support Mr. Shoja' Movaffaqi?' Mr. Mokhtari responded, "Since the population of Qom Province has been increased and on the other hand a great number of people enter the town of Qom everyday to pilgrimage the holy shrine of Hazrat Ma'soumeh (SA), we found it necessary to set up a soft drink producing center and the first thing we should do was to manufacture the needed machinery. Mr. Movaffaqi has carried out the first steps of designing as well as manufacturing the chassis of the machine but due to the financial problems and lack of support he had given up. Since we had intended to start our activities, we negotiated with two giant soft drink producing companies but unfortunately they did not welcome our plan and refused to invest although they were extremely in need of the machine."



Reza Mokhtari
Manager of Qom Soft Drink Co.

Shaja' Movaffaqi: I have manufactured a soft drink filler which saves up 300,000 dollars of hard currency per unit.



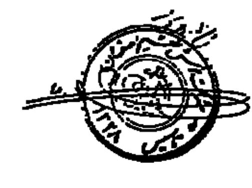
اصفهان: خیابان آبشار

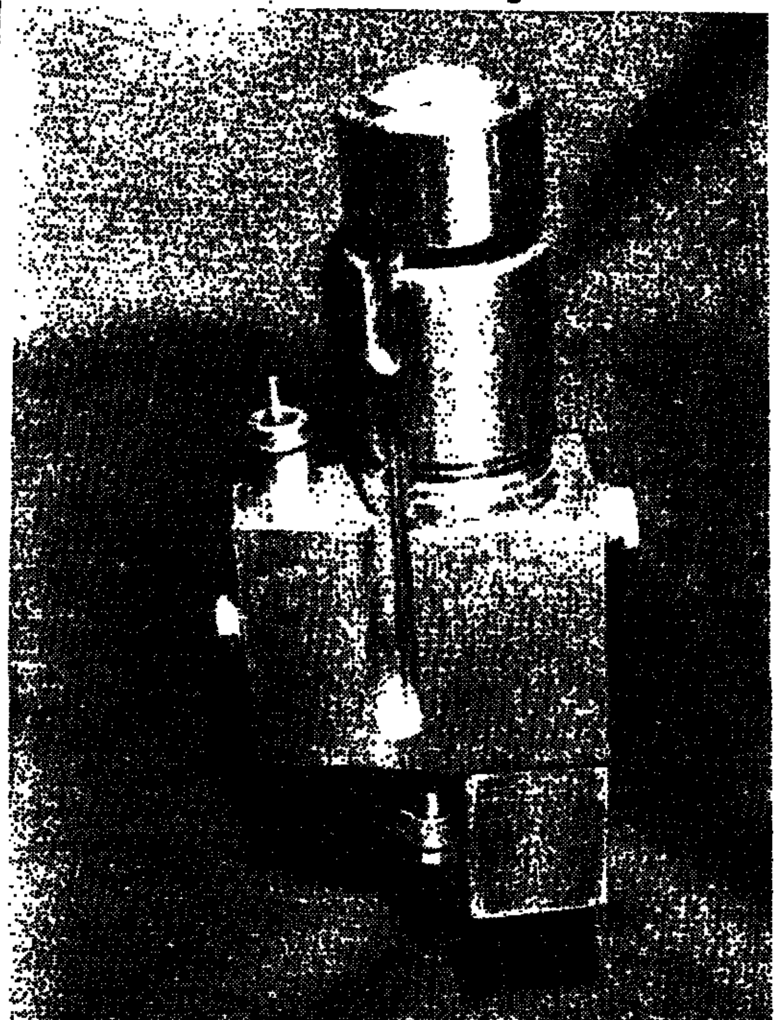
شرکت خوشش طعم اصفهان

- سهامی خاص -

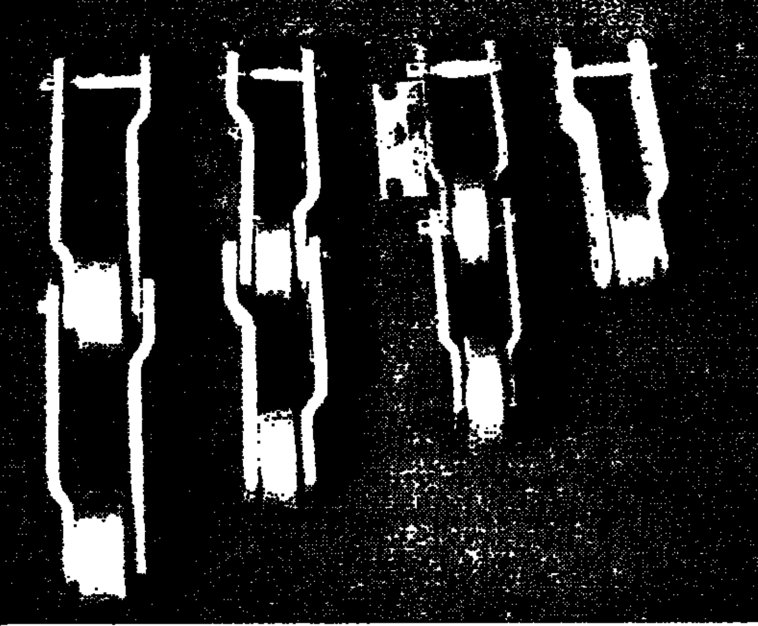
تولیدکننده نوشابه‌های گازدار غیرالکلی

شماره: ۱۸۱-۲۵۴۹
تاریخ: ۶۲/۷/۲۴
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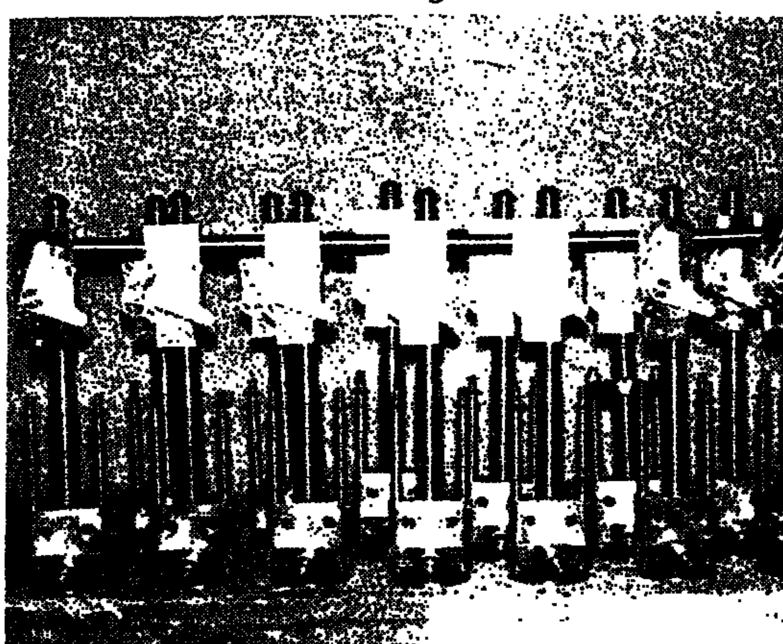




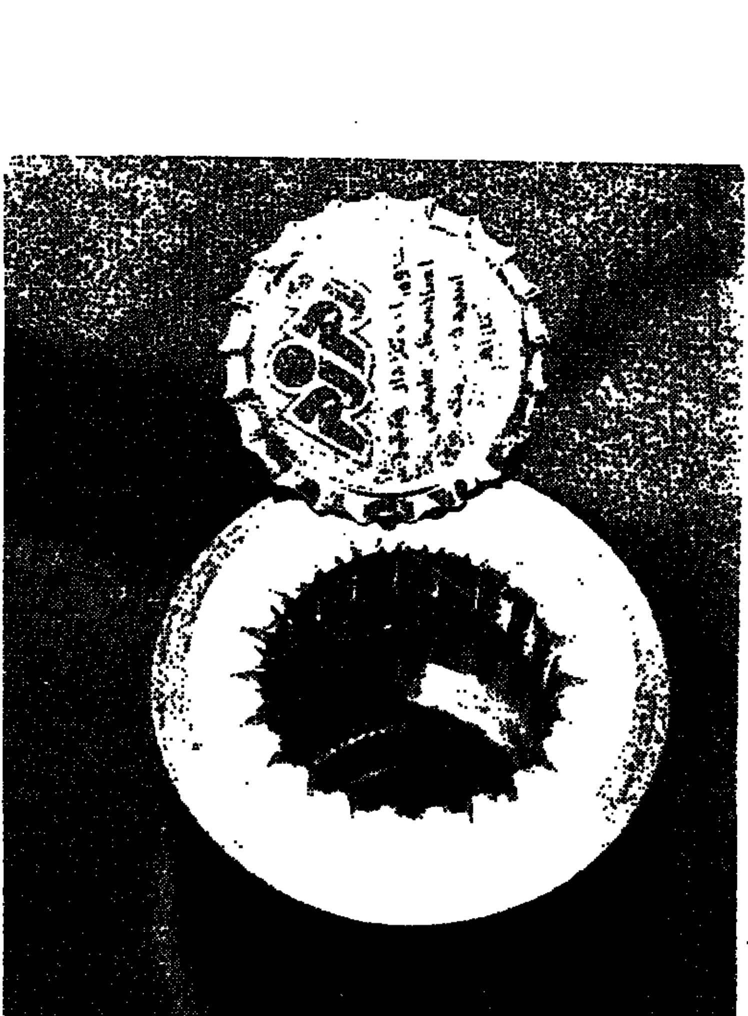
Injection Rod

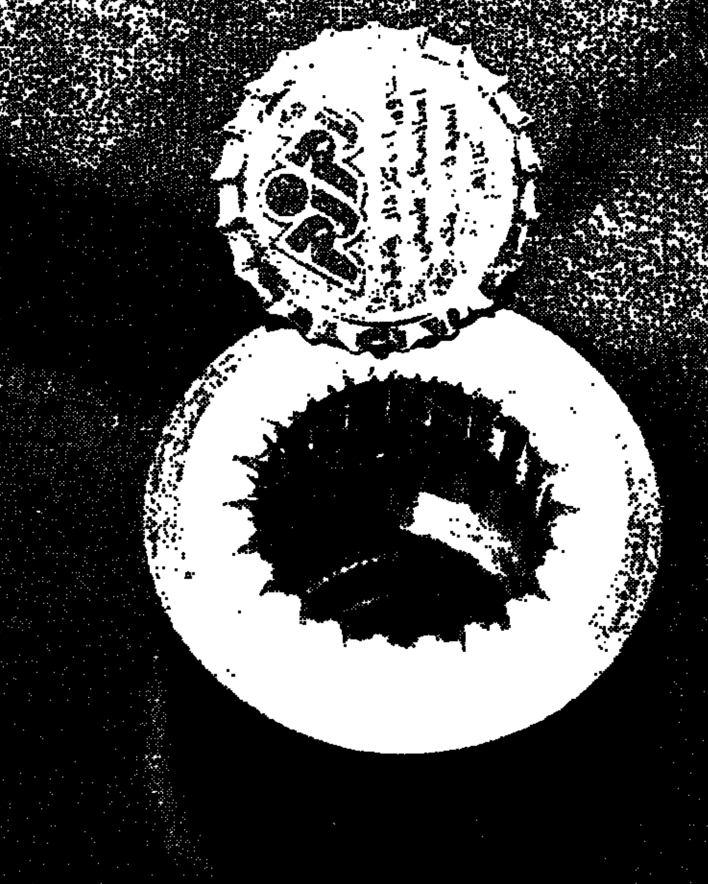


Bottle-washing chains



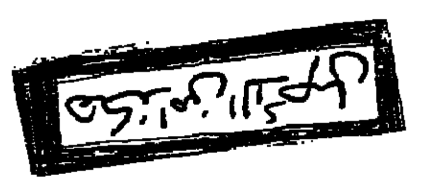
Bottle-filling taps





Bottle-capping punch





Early Intervention Yields Zero Rate of HIV

LOS ANGELES — A muscular, 27-year-old gang member with a ring through his cheek and a full regalia of tattoos on his chest looks away as a technician sinks a needle into his arm to test for HIV.

Around a card table stacked with multicolored and flavored condoms in a plaza in one of the city's roughest housing projects, fellow gang members chat and wait their turn for a test normally given in the hushed atmosphere of clinics.

Some 100 gang members have been tested without a single case of HIV in what is considered by many a high risk area.

In New York, intravenous drug use and sexually-spread HIV in similar gang areas has pushed the rate to 50 percent.

So, how do health technicians giving the tests in a neighborhood where gang members openly sell drugs and are highly sexually active explain the zero HIV rate?

"We're not sure," said Irma Ramos, a technician for the sexually transmitted disease (STD) program. "But they have no HIV, no syphilis, no hepatitis b; but there is a lot of chlamydia."

"They are not IV drug users. They'll smoke pot. They'll drink themselves silly. They sell the stuff, but they don't like needles and won't (shoot up) slam."

This is in a state of 30 million people where an estimated one in 200 people are infected with the HIV virus that can lead to AIDS.

In an area of Hollywood where there is a heavy concentration of nightclubs, a random cross-section of youths aged 15 to 23 were tested in one study which found 10 percent were infected with HIV, the AIDS virus.

Every two months, gang members have been tested in the bullet-pocked neighborhoods of Primero flats, Cuatro flats and the mob crew where mostly residents of Mexican descent live in frayed-at-the-edges public housing.

The project has caught the interest of other epidemiologists, and this month, members of this tiny corps of workers conducting the tests will go to conferences in Washington and New Orleans, Louisiana to talk about their project.

Elsewhere, clinics are set up and technicians wait for clients to come to them.

Too often, by the time those infected go to the clinic the virus has already spread to the community. This is an effort to short-circuit the cycle.

The testing project was organized by Mike Garcia, of Bien Estar, a homegrown group that goes into Los Angeles' roughest Latino neighborhoods to quell violence and look after some of the city's neglected.

As a former gang member, Garcia, 51, is one of only a handful who cross gang lines unscathed with health technicians in tow to get to the residents.

Wesley Ford, the Health Department's chief epidemiologist, speculated the low rate among these particular gangs comes from low risk behavior. They are not using IV drugs and are mostly heterosexual.

Moreover, he said, that the number tested so far is statistically low and that once it enters the group it could spread as quickly as anywhere else.

There is one high risk factor that does not usually show on the profile of AIDS victims: prison.

About seven percent of the jail population is HIV positive, Ford said. Garcia said those coming out of prison and into the projects are almost immediately approached to be tested before they infect others.

"Sixty-five percent of male youths here will end up in jail. That's part of growing up here," said Garcia who served time for armed robbery and attempted murder.

"There, there's always blood involved. There is needle-sharing and drugs in prison. There is fighting and stabbing and it's blood to blood," Garcia said. "But so far," he said, "they are coming out clean." (AFP)

WHO Warns of Synthetic Drugs Epidemic

GENEVA — Consumption of designer drugs, such as Ecstasy, Speed and Ice, is reaching epidemic proportions, medical experts warned recently at a World Health Organization conference to address the problem.

In the 1970s, heroine was the main source of anxiety, followed in the 1980s by cocaine, but the problem of the 1990s is a "dramatic increase" in the abuse of amphetamines and methamphetamines among youth the world over, experts said.

Alan Lopez, who is heading the WHO's program on substance abuse, underlined that production of the stimulants was cheap and easy, and traffickers made staggering profits.

He said that more than one young person out of 10 had tried the drugs at least once, but had no sense of the danger.

On the contrary, "sometimes they are quite proud of it," a fellow specialist Michael Farrell said.

In Britain, 14 percent of youths aged between 16 and 29 said they had taken these chemical stimulants at least once, the conference was told.

Meanwhile, the incidence of death and illness is likely to increase as the level of purity is increasing, bringing with it "an acute health risk," said the chairman of Friday's meeting, Robert Ali of Australia.

Among the adverse effects, the WHO listed damage to the nervous system and the brain, accelerated heart beat, which could result in cardiac arrests and thickening of the blood likely to cause attacks or convulsions. In addition, the drug-taking can lead to violent behavior.

According to Filipino Doctor Cornelio Banaag, designer drug taking has "become a major concern" in Asia, but no region of the world is unaffected.

In the Czech Republic, nine times out of 10, the drugs are injected rather than swallowed, which results in the added danger of infection.

There is a flourishing trade between Mexico, which produces the basic components, and the United States, where the drugs are manufactured.

Countries where the incidence is high include Australia, Canada and the Scandinavian nations.

Apart from the illegal trading, amphetamines legally prescribed by doctors, find their way into illicit use and in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, doctors have a tendency to overprescribe such drugs.

(AFP)

Microsoft to Spend $400 million on 'Net Services

WASHINGTON — The U.S. software giant Microsoft will spend $400 million in 1996 on its loss-making Internet services and is likely to keep losing money on them for the next three years, the company's second in command said according to press reports recently.

Microsoft Executive Vice President Steven Ballmer, addressing an industry conference in Boston, said the company had already spent $300 to $400 million this year on its on-line service, Microsoft Network, its Internet and cable television unit, MSNBC, and its Expedia Travel Site, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

"MSN — it's a loss," Ballmer acknowledged. "Expedia — a loss. MSNBC — a loss."

And such shortfalls were expected to continue for another three years, he told the gathering.

"We're going to lose a lot of money before we break even," Ballmer was quoted as saying.

The journal noted that while thousands of companies — most of them lacking the enormous financial resources of Microsoft — had gotten on the World Wide Web in hopes of winning new customers, very few had turned a profit.

"If only companies with the financial power of Microsoft can make it in the content business, then we're years away from a viable Internet economy," the journal quoted George Colony, president of Forester Research, as saying.

Ballmer was speaking at a conference organized by the market research group.

(AFP)

NEC-Bull to Make PCs in Malaysia

TOKYO — Packard Bell NEC Inc., owned by Japan's NEC Corp. and Cie Des Machines Bull of France, will start assembling personal computers in Malaysia in January 1996 for sales in Asia, NEC officials said recently.

Production will start with monthly output of 10,000 units at a plant in the Prai Industrial Complex in northern Malaysia, they said.

The assembled PCs will be marketed through both NEC and Packard Bell outlets in Asian countries but with different product features, the officials said.

Packard Bell, based in Sacramento, California, is owned roughly 20 percent each by NEC and Bull, they said.

(AFP)

Islands for Sale or Rent

HAMBURG, Germany — If you can afford to buy a car you can also find the money for a tiny island, according to Farhad Vladi, an estate agent who specializes in selling and renting islands.

His company, Vladi Private Islands, has on offer about 400 "scraps of land surrounded by water," as he puts it.

An island with a private harbor and a villa one kilometer about half a mile) off the Italian coast is going for $10 million. Palm Island, a tiny corner of paradise 16,000 meters square (172,160 feet square) with three villas lying 80 meters (264 feet) off Florida is for sale at $400 million.

One of the cheapest properties available for the cost of a car, at under $30,000, is a 6,500 square meters (69,940 square feet) islet in a lake in Canada's maritime province of Nova Scotia.

In more Clement climes, the money is considerably more serious.

An island with a private harbor and a villa one kilometer (about half a mile) off the Italian coast is going for $10 million. Palm Island, a tiny corner of paradise 16,000 meters square (172,160 feet square) with three villas lying 80 meters (264 feet) off Florida is for sale at $400 million.

"There are almost 100,000 islands in the world, of which some 5,000 are sellable," said Vladi, 42. "That means that they at least have fresh water, but some have houses and even castles."

He sells 30 or so a year, and the company's annual turnover is between $30 and $45 million.

Now a Canadian citizen, Vladi was born here of an Iranian father and a German mother. He spends four months of the year here, and three in Halifax, the capital of Nova Scotia, where his agency also has an office.

The lure of the islands snared him in his student days, when in 1967 he acted as go-between for the sale of an island in the Seychelles, the scattered Indian Ocean archipelago off the East African coast.

He pocketed a handsome commission from the $500,000 selling price, and in 1971, armed with a doctorate in economics, Vladi set up shop here. He says he has sold more than 500 islands in the past 25 years.

"It is all extremely interesting, since I visit all the islands which I put up for sale, and the rest of the time I go prospecting everywhere, or almost everywhere, to find more." Vladi said.

He remembers his best deal as being the sale of a dozen islets in the Seychelles to the family of a former king.

"You must love islands to live on one," he advises, adding, "and before buying, you must go and stay there."

Vladi organizes rentals on islands, often for clients who have bought one, at $100 a day per person. Would-be Robinson Crusoes have to pay their own fares in addition, of course.

Vladi steers clear of trouble spots where state sovereignty is in dispute, as in the confines of the Greek and Turkish territorial waters. Legal snags arise when the military in a given country object to a sale, or environmentalists campaign against any buildings being erected.

Last year a pressure group wanting to stop French nuclear tests at Mururoa in the South Pacific tried to buy an atoll from him, but the government in Paris vetoed the purchase.

Even small islands can be troublesome to look after properly. Vladi is fond of quoting a Breton proverb: "The owner of an island is blessed twice in life — when he buys, and when he sells".

Even small islands can be troublesome to look after properly. Vladi is fond of quoting a Breton proverb: "The owner of an island is blessed twice in life — when he buys, and when he sells".

(AFP)

Colonizing the Colonizers: Satellite TV in India

NEW DELHI, India — When foreign TV arrived five years ago, many Indians cried cultural invasion. Today, the nation of 920 million seems to be colonizing the satellite networks.

Two music channels — the American MTV and Hong Kong-based Channel-V - are airing hours of Indian pop and film music. Star TV of Hong Kong and the American ESPN have added Hindi commentaries to their sports coverage.

The brash newcomers had thought foreign shows would overwhelm Doordarshan, with its melodramatic Hindi soap operas. But state TV continues to dominate. It's cheap and widely available and has ample political and financial backing.

Subtitles in Hindi, the language spoken by most Indians, are pasted on blockbuster Hollywood movies, and there are plans to dub the American television series "Baywatch" in Hindi.

Star TV, a major player here, says Indian programs will account for nearly 75 percent of all its Asian programing by 1997.

"In order to succeed in Asia in the long term, you need both Western shows and shows that are tailored to local tastes," said Gene Swinstead, Bombay-based managing director of Star TV's Indian and Middle East operations.

That's especially true if the stations want to compete with Doordarshan, India's state-run broadcaster.

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Economic reforms, under way in India for the last five years, have yet to touch the state-controlled broadcasting system. Indian TV moguls rely on politicians who pressure the government to restrict foreign operations. While they can't keep them out entirely, they can make it hard to do business.

"Our programs have to be carried to Singapore for satellite broadcast" back to Indian subscribers, said Nandan Unnikrishnan of Business India Television, a news and current affairs channel.

The government denies independent stations facilities to "uplink", or send programs directly by satellite from India.

Undeterred, Star TV recently hired New Delhi Television, a local producer, to provide, starting in November, news and current affairs programs focusing on India in English and Hindi.

One ploy of foreign-owned stations may be stealing local expertise. R.K. Singh, head of ESPN's operations in India, is a former Doordarshan executive as is Rathikant Basu, recently named head of news in India for Star TV.

"We are here to stay," Singh said.

It is likely only the big players will last in a crowded market. Ten new satellite channels were launched in India over the last year alone.

Costs are soaring for most of the nearly 50 channels. The annual hardware cost for operating a 24-hour channel is estimated at about 180 million rupees, or $2.8 million.

Costs are soaring for most of the nearly 50 channels. The annual hardware cost for operating a 24-hour channel is estimated at about 180 million rupees, or $2.8 million.

"The available advertising money can't support all these channels," said Ashok Raina, a private software producer. "A shakeout has started and there will be only a few victors in the next two to three years."

Doordarshan, which means television in Hindi, accounted for 64% of 125 billion rupees, or $3.57 billion, of the TV ad revenue generated in India last year, according to the Indian Marketing Research Bureau.

(AP).

U.S. and Vatican Among 14 Countries Clarifying Summit Conclusions

ROME — The United States and Vatican were among 14 countries late Saturday clarifying what the World Food Summit meant to them, with Washington concerned about rights and the Vatican birth control, summit officials and sources said.

Washington filed a two-page interpretative statement to make sure that the "right to food" proclaimed at the summit did not become a legal obligation creating problems for Washington.

The text, obtained by AFP Saturday, said that while the United States joined in the summit statement that everyone has the "right to adequate food," it did not want this to lead to "any change in the current state of conventional or customary international law."

For Washington, such rights remain "a goal or aspiration to be realized progressively that does not give rise to any international obligations nor diminishes the responsibilities of national governments toward their citizens."

In another statement, the Vatican on Saturday said it retained the view that birth control should not be used as a means of limiting population growth.

"The stabilization of world population must not be done by national or international measures stopping married couples from deciding on reproduction or the number of their children," the Vatican statement said.

The "Rome declaration on world food security" and the "World Food Summit plan of action" were adopted by acclamation by the Food Summit joining 187 nations on its opening day Wednesday.

They had been hammered out in pre-summit meetings and effectively adopted unanimously on October 31, summit officials said.

The reserves filed illustrate some of the arguments that went into adoption of the draft plan of the two texts, which aim "to eradicate hunger in all countries."

They also showed some countries' preoccupations. Iraq, for instance, is believed to have protested that the UN embargo on its oil sales was not legal, summit sources said.

The other 11 countries filing reservations or interpretative statements were Argentina, Burundi, Iran, Lebanon, Malta, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates.

The Rome summit was unique among such gatherings in that the main texts were agreed on in advance and approved on the meeting's first day without any haggling.

The Rome declaration and action plan have no legal force but commit governments to a drive to halve by the year 2015 the number of 840 million people now suffering in developing countries from malnutrition.

They were the first such major texts since a ministerial world food conference in 1974 had pledged to eradicate hunger by 1980.

The Rome declaration said: "We consider it intolerable that more than 800 million people throughout the world, and particularly in developing countries, do not have enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs."

One issue was the difference between countries like the United States which push for free trade and others, like the European Community and Japan, which define fairness as protecting certain industries, and therefore jobs, sources close to the debate said.

The compromise in this area was to advocate both a market-oriented and a free economy.

A compromise was also struck over the issue of making democracy a criterion for achieving food security. This dispute had pitted the developed countries against developing states, which believe their own sovereign rights should dictate how they govern.



The first commitment of the action plan said there should be "respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, a transparent and effective legal framework, transparent and accountable governance and administration in all public and private national and international institutions."

But the paragraph in the introduction that preceded this specifies that "the implementation of the recommendations contained in this plan of action is the sovereign right and responsibility of each state through national laws."

The U.S. interpretative statement said about this paragraph: "Various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions do not diminish the need for full respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms." (AFP)

U.S. Set to Nudge Boutros-Ghali Closer to the Door

UNITED NATIONS — Discussions on whether to keep Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the helm of the United Nations go into high gear amid expectations that the United States will cast its veto against the secretary-general.

Capping a five-month crusade against a second term for Boutros-Ghali, U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright is expected to formally block a bid to put the Egyptian diplomat in the running for the top UN post, according to diplomats here.

Egypt set the stage for the U.S. showdown with the UN chief last week when it nominated Boutros-Ghali for a second term after his five-year mandate expires on December 31.

"The candidature of Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali enjoys wide support by the majority of the United Nations membership, and it is my government's hope that the outcome of the council's discussions will duly reflect the will of the majority," Egyptian Ambassador Nabil Elaraby said.

U.S. diplomats on Friday ruled out a possible compromise that would allow Boutros-Ghali to stay on, even temporarily, while a UN spokesman said the secretary-general had no intention of bowing out of the race.

"Rumors to the effect that Mr. Boutros-Ghali may withdraw his candidacy are false," spokesman Ahmad Fawzi said.

Aside from Egypt, Boutros-Ghali has the backing of the other two African countries in the UN Security Council — Guinea-Bissau and Botswana — and from big powers Russia, China and France.

Diplomats here said French President Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien and South African President Nelson Mandela had appealed to U.S. President Bill Clinton this week to reverse his position and allow Boutros-Ghali to remain, but to no avail.

Boutros-Ghali is likely to become the first secretary-general in the 51-year history of the United Nations to be the target of a U.S. veto.

He would join the ranks of Kurt Waldheim who in 1981 was unable to run for a third mandate after China issued its veto against his candidacy. Beijing then contended that it was time to allow a non-European to lead the United Nations.

Anticipating a raucous debate at the UN Security Council, Indonesia's envoy Nugroho Wisnumurti, who holds the rotating chair of the council, said late last week he hoped that discussions would not be tinged with "too much emotion."

The United States maintains that Boutros-Ghali has failed to reform the United Nations, a demand pressed by Republicans in the U.S. Congress who view the world body as an ineffective alternative to American leadership.

But if a vote is held on Monday, the United States may appear isolated in its campaign to dislodge the 74-year-old Egyptian, diplomats said.

Only Poland and possibly Britain are expected to follow the U.S. lead and vote against a second term for Boutros-Ghali, according to diplomats.

But the U.S. veto, which would be irreversible, would also kick off a race for the top UN post as other candidates have refrained from waging campaigns openly until Washington had taken formal steps to oppose Boutros-Ghali.

Among possible African candidates are the Ghanaian UN Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping Kofi Annan, Organization of the Islamic Conference Secretary-General Hamid Algabid, Amara Essy, the Ivory Coast foreign minister and Salim Ahmed Salim, the secretary-general of the Organization for African Unity.

Europeans Gro Harlem Brundtland, who retired last month as Norwegian prime minister and Irish President Mary Robinson have also been tipped as possible successors.

According to the UN Charter, the secretary-general is named by the 185-nation General Assembly acting upon recommendation of the Security Council.

There are no clear rules however on how to achieve a consensus among the 15 member-states of the Security Council and diplomats said they did not rule out a major grid lock over the issue of the next secretary-general. (AFP)



1,200 Prisoners in Jordan May Receive Amnesty

AMMAN — About 1,200 prisoners could benefit from a partial amnesty decreed by King Hussein, Jordanian Justice Minister Abdel Karim Doughmi said.

"The number of prisoners whose cases will be reviewed is about 1,200," he told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

In a letter to Prime Minister Abdelpkarim Kabariti, King Hussein ordered that two days before the celebration on Thursday of his 61st birthday, an amnesty would be granted to "every prisoner who has served enough of his sentence or whose release will not threaten the security" of the country.

According to Doughmi, a ministerial commission was formed to implement the king's decree.

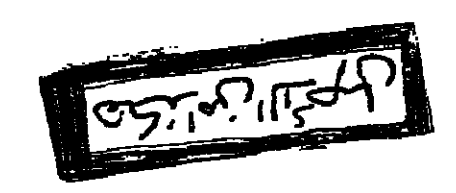
In his letter King Hussein also ordered a halt to judicial proceedings against people involved in the rioting last summer after bread subsidies were removed, resulting in a 250 percent rise in bread prices.

Judicial sources estimated that 253 people could thus escape proceedings. (AFP)

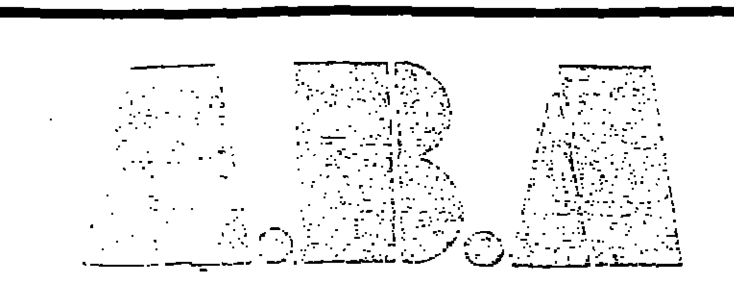


CHASSELAY, France (November 11): Illegal African immigrants, who were expelled from the Parisian Saint-Bernard church this summer, wave a poster as they stage a protest during a ceremony at the African cemetery of Chasseley, center France, to commemorate the 78th anniversary of the end of World War I.

(AFP PHOTO)

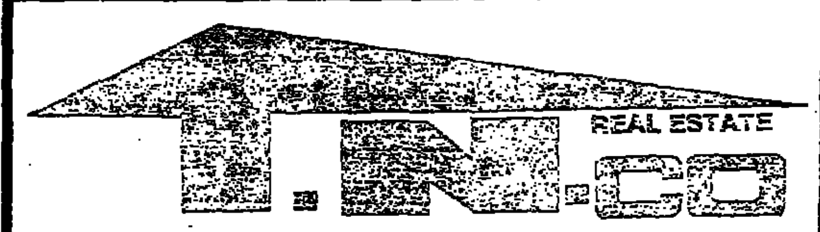


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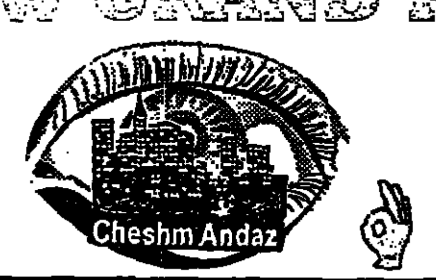
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